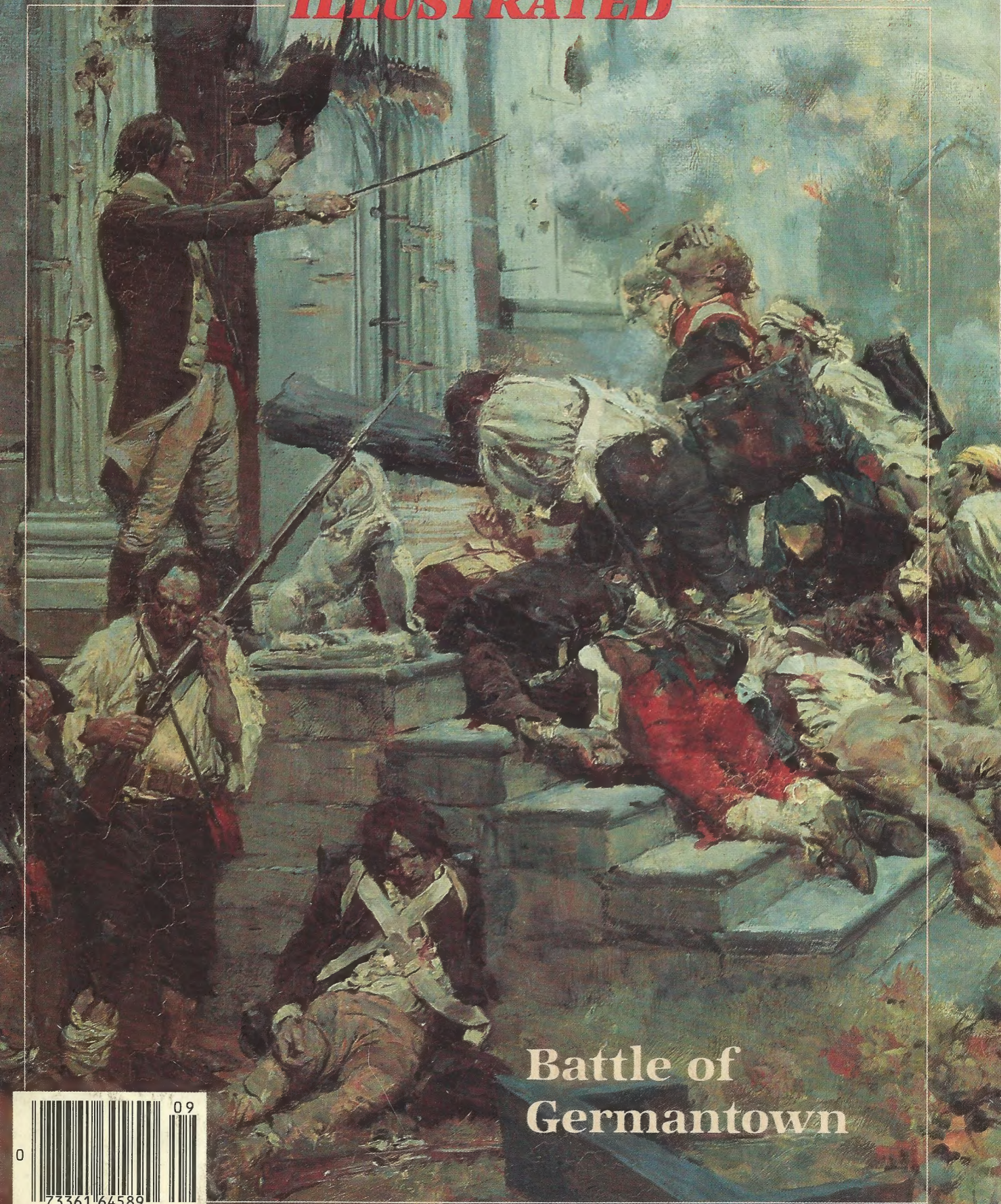


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Battle of
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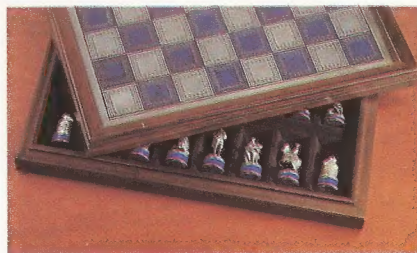
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Mailbox

Flag Over the Alamo

As an amateur vexillologist, it was surprising to me to find a fairly serious omission in your otherwise excellent edition on Texas and the Alamo [March]. Nowhere was there any mention of the flag that flew over the Alamo during the battle. That particular flag, unlike any of the single-starred flags that preceded and followed it, symbolized the willingness of at least some of those who occupied the fort to call themselves Mexicans. It was indeed a Mexican flag with the only change being the substitution of the numerals "1824" for the Aztec Eagle of the regular flag.

These numbers signified the wish of those in the conservative group of Texans to return to the Mexican constitution of 1824, which had been abrogated by General Santa Anna.

Perhaps Santa Anna attacked the wrong group of Texans. For by eliminating the conservative reformists, he was left to face only the more radical group of rebels at San Jacinto. Indeed, he forced many otherwise conservatives into their party.

Thank you for your good magazine.
The Rev. Andrew Daughters
Oakley, California

Mess Afloat

I read with interest and sympathy Mr. Dick Lykin's letter [April "Mailbox"] telling of his unhappy eating experiences aboard *APA-51* in World War II.

In the interests of balanced reporting and justice to the Navy, I can only cite my own experiences. During my thirty-two years in uniform, I ate in the crew's mess in two battleships and one destroyer, and in the wardroom in three aircraft carriers, one destroyer, one cruiser, and one battleship. I have also been a guest in the chiefs' mess and the warrant officers' mess. I have sampled the crew's mess innumerable times and have been a wardroom guest (for two weeks) in one of our new aircraft carriers.

In all applicable instances, I would rank meals as to variety and quality as follows: first place, chiefs' mess; second place, crew's mess; third place, warrant officers' mess; and fourth place, the wardroom mess. On those occasions when we were stuck at battle stations and could not eat in our regular messes, our "white hats" always

threw away the K-Rations except for candy and cigarettes.

John M. Gore

Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Oakton, Virginia

Dark Day In Ohio

I was pleased to read of the recollections of "Mailbox" contributors in the March issue, referring to the "darkest day," which occurred in [September] 1950.

In Warren, Ohio, in the northeast corner of the state, the skies darkened enough that my devout mother-in-law turned to me—a guest at her home and the only one with a car—and asked if I would take her to the Roman Catholic church downtown. She needed the comfort of the House of the Lord. I accommodated her and was surprised to find, when we arrived at the church, that it was filled.

There was never an explanation given for the darkness, although I have heard the suggestions that there were fires burning in Canada; but there was absolutely no smell of smoke. I have often wondered if there was some type of atomic testing or other explanation for this phenomenon. It was broad in scope and well remembered as far west as Ohio.

Lynn B. Griffith, Jr.
Warren, Ohio

Credit Where Due

As a member of the WASP I enjoyed tremendously reading "We Also Served" in the November 1985 issue of *American History Illustrated*.

However, I should like to correct one inaccuracy which occurred on page 18. Class 44-W-4 was not the first class to go from the primary phase to the advanced phase of training in the AT-6 trainer. 44-W-3 was the first class to do this, and I have my logbooks and records as verification. . . .

Margaret C. Tamplin

American History Illustrated welcomes comments from our readers. While we endeavor to publish a representative sampling of this correspondence, we regret that limited space prevents us from printing every letter. Address correspondence to The Mailbox, American History Illustrated, Box 8200, Harrisburg, PA 17105. ★

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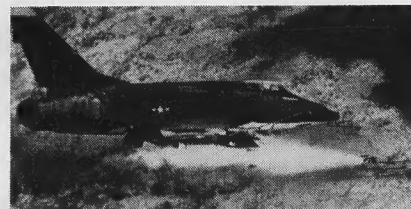
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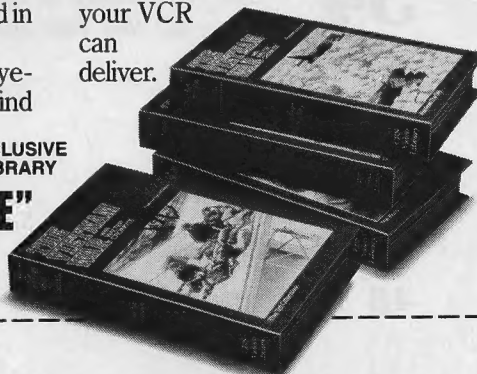
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AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 5 SEPTEMBER 1986



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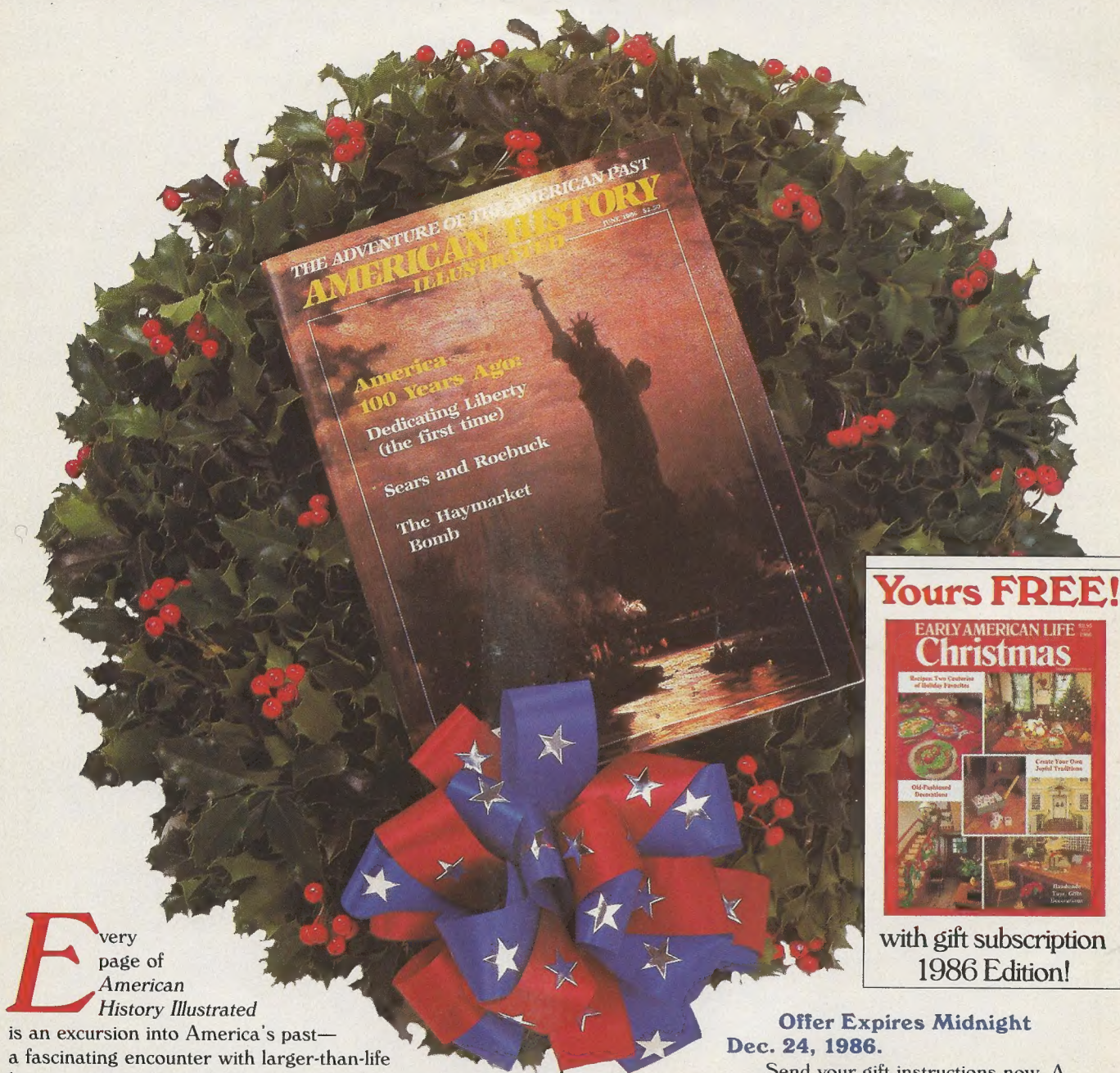


Cover

Howard Pyle's action-filled painting "Attack on Chew House" (reproduced in detail here) documents an episode from the Revolutionary War battle of Germantown, which took place near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the morning of October 4, 1777. As pointed out in an article in this issue, the ultimate significance of the battle was not that the Americans lost, but that they came so near to winning.

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Under the leadership of John Marshall, the nation's highest tribunal became a court supreme in fact as well as in name.

The Great Chief Justice

by Brian McGinty

HE WAS A TALL MAN with long legs, gangling arms, and a round, friendly face. He had a thick head of dark hair and strong, black eyes—"penetrating eyes," a friend called them, "beaming with intelligence and good nature." He was born in a log cabin in western Virginia and never wholly lost his rough frontier manners. Yet John Marshall became a lawyer, a member of Congress, a diplomat, an advisor to presidents, and the most influential and respected judge in the history of the United States. "If American law were to be represented by a single figure," Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., once said, "sceptic and worshipper alike would agree without dispute that the figure could be but one alone, and that one John Marshall."

To understand Marshall's preeminence in American legal history it is necessary to understand the marvelous rebirth the United States Supreme Court experienced after he became its chief justice in 1801. During all of the previous eleven years of its existence, the highest judicial court in the federal system had been weak and ineffectual—ignored by most of the nation's lawyers and judges and scorned by its principal politicians. Under Marshall's leadership, the court became a strong and vital participant in national affairs. During his more than thirty-four years as Chief Justice of the United States, Marshall welded the Supreme Court into an effective and cohesive whole. With the support of his colleagues on the high bench, he declared acts of Congress and of the president unconstitutional, struck down laws that infringed on federal prerogatives, and gave force and dignity to basic guarantees of life and liberty and property. Without John Marshall, the Supreme Court might never have been anything but an inconsequential junior partner of the executive and legislative branches of the national government. Under his guidance and inspiration, it became what the Constitution intended it to be—a court supreme in fact as well as in name.

Jefferson and Marshall:



PROFILE PORTRAITS
BY M. FEVRET DE SAINT MEMIN
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Fellow Virginians Thomas Jefferson (left) and John Marshall (opposite) had contrasting philosophies regarding the roles of government. Jefferson believed in state sovereignty and in a limited role for national government.

BORN ON SEPTEMBER 4, 1755, in Fauquier County, Virginia, John Marshall was the oldest of fifteen children born to Thomas Marshall and Mary Randolph Keith. On his mother's side, the young Virginian was distantly related to Thomas Jefferson, the gentlemanly squire of Monticello and author of the Declaration of Independence. Aside from this kinship, there was little similarity between Marshall and Jefferson. A son of the frontier, Marshall was a backwoodsman at heart, more comfortable in the company of farmers than intellectuals or scholars. Jefferson was a polished aristocrat who liked to relax in the library of his mansion near Charlottesville and meditate on the subtleties of philosophy and political theory.

The contrast between the two men was most clearly drawn in their opposing political beliefs. An advocate of limiting the powers of central government, Thomas Jefferson thought of himself first and foremost as a Virginian (his epitaph did not even mention the fact that he had once been president of the United States). Marshall, in contrast, had, even as a young man, come to transcend his state roots, to look to Congress rather than the Virginia legislature as his government, to think of himself first, last, and always as an American. Throughout their careers, their contrasting philosophies would place the two men at odds.

Marshall's national outlook was furthered by his father's close association with George Washington and his own unflinching admiration for the nation's first president. Thomas Marshall had been a schoolmate of

Washington and, as a young man, helped him survey the Fairfax estates in northern Virginia. John Marshall served under Washington during the bitter winter at Valley Forge and later became one of the planter-turned-statesman's most loyal supporters.

Years after the Revolution was over, Marshall attributed his political views to his experiences as a foot soldier in the great conflict, recalling that he grew up "at a time when a love of union and resistance to the claims of Great Britain were the inseparable inmates of the same bosom;—when patriotism and a strong fellow feeling with our suffering fellow citizens of Boston were identical;—when the maxim 'united we stand, divided we fall' was the maxim of every orthodox American . . ." "I had imbibed these sentiments so thoroughly [sic] that they constituted a part of my being," wrote Marshall. "I carried them with me into the army where I found myself associated with brave men from different states who were risking life and everything valuable in a common cause believed by all to be most precious; and where I was confirmed in the habit of considering America as my country, and Congress as my government."

After Washington's death, Marshall became the great man's biographer, penning a long and admiring account of Washington's life as a farmer, soldier, and statesman, expounding the Federalist philosophy represented by Washington and attacking those who stood in opposition to it. Jefferson, who detested Federalism as much as he disliked Marshall, was incensed by the biography, which he branded a "five-volume libel."

Two Great Minds in Conflict



Marshall believed in a strong central government, in the Constitution as the key to the laws of the land, and in courts as the supreme custodians of those laws—views that would influence his shaping of the Supreme Court.

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FRONTIERSMAN THOUGH HE WAS, Marshall was no bumpkin. His father had personally attended to his earliest schooling, teaching him to read and write and giving him a taste for history and poetry (by the age of twelve he had already transcribed the whole of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*). When he was fourteen, Marshall was sent to a school a hundred miles from home, where future president James Monroe was one of his classmates. After a year, he returned home to be tutored by a Scottish pastor who had come to live in the Marshall house. The future lawyer read Horace and Livy, pored through the English dictionary, and scraped at least a passing acquaintance with the "Bible of the Common Law," William Blackstone's celebrated *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

In 1779, during a lull in the Revolution, young Marshall attended lectures at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. He remained at the college only a few weeks, but the impression made on him by his professor there, George Wythe, was lasting. A lawyer, judge, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Wythe is best remembered today as the first professor of law at any institution of higher learning in the United States. As a teacher, he was a seminal influence in the development of American law, counting among his many distinguished students Thomas Jefferson, John Breckinridge, and Henry Clay.

Marshall did not remain long at William and Mary. It was the nearly universal custom then for budding lawyers to "read law" in the office of an older lawyer or

judge or, failing that, to appeal to the greatest teacher of all—experience—for instruction. In August 1780, a few weeks before his twenty-fifth birthday, Marshall appeared at the Fauquier County Courthouse where, armed with a license signed by Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, he was promptly admitted to the bar.

His first cases were not important, but he handled them well and made a favorable impression on his neighbors; so favorable that they sent him to Richmond in 1782 as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. Though he retained a farm in Fauquier County all his life, Richmond became Marshall's home after his election to the legislature. The general courts of Virginia held their sessions in the new capital, and the commonwealth's most distinguished lawyers crowded its bar. When Marshall's fortunes improved, he built a comfortable brick house on the outskirts of the city, in which he and his beloved wife Polly raised five sons and one daughter (four other offspring died during childhood).

Marshall's skill as a lawyer earned him an enthusiastic coterie of admirers and his honest country manners an even warmer circle of friends. He liked to frequent the city's taverns and grog shops, more for conviviality than for refreshment, and he was an enthusiastic member of the Barbecue Club, which met each Saturday to eat, drink, "josh," and play quoits.

Marshall liked to do his own shopping for groceries. Each morning he marched through the streets with a basket under his arm, collecting fresh fruits, vegetables, and poultry for the Marshall family larder. Years after

“If American law were to be represented by a single figure . . . the figure could be but one alone, and that one John Marshall.”

his death, Richmonders were fond of recalling the day when a stranger came into the city in search of a lawyer and found Marshall in front of the Eagle Hotel, holding a hat filled with cherries and speaking casually with the hotel proprietor. After Marshall went on his way, the stranger approached the proprietor and asked if he could direct him to the best lawyer in Richmond. The proprietor replied quite readily that the best lawyer was John Marshall, the tall man with the hat full of cherries who had just walked down the street.

But the stranger could not believe that a man who walked through town so casually could be a really “proper barrister” and chose instead to hire a lawyer who wore a black suit and powdered wig. On the day set for the stranger’s trial, several cases were scheduled to be argued. In the first that was called, the visitor was surprised to see that John Marshall and his own lawyer were to speak on opposite sides. As he listened to the arguments, he quickly realized that he had made a serious mistake. At the first recess, he approached Marshall and confessed that he had come to Richmond with a hundred dollars to hire the best lawyer in the city, but he had chosen the wrong one and now had only five dollars left. Would Marshall agree to represent him for such a small fee? Smiling good-naturedly, Marshall accepted the five dollars, then proceeded to make a brilliant legal argument that quickly won the stranger’s case.

Marshall was not an eloquent man; not eloquent, that is, in the sense that his great contemporary, Patrick Henry, a spellbinding courtroom orator, was eloquent. Marshall was an effective enough speaker; but, more importantly, he was a rigorously logical thinker. He had the ability to reduce complex issues to bare essentials and easily and effortlessly apply abstract principles to resolve them.

Thomas Jefferson (himself a brilliant lawyer) was awed, even intimidated, by Marshall’s powers of persuasion. “When conversing with Marshall,” Jefferson once said, “I never admit anything. So sure as you admit any position to be good, no matter how remote from the conclusion he seeks to establish, you are gone. . . . Why, if he were to ask me if it were daylight or not, I’d reply, ‘Sir, I don’t know, I can’t tell.’”

THOUGH MARSHALL’S LEGAL PROWESS and genial manner won him many friends in Richmond, his political views did little to endear him to the Old Dominion’s political establishment. While Jefferson and his followers preached the virtues of agrarian democracy, viewing with alarm every step by which the fledgling national government extended its powers through the young nation, Marshall clearly allied himself with Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams and the Federalist policies they espoused. ♦

Marshall was not a delegate to the convention that met in Philadelphia in 1787 to draft a constitution for the United States, but he took a prominent part in efforts to secure ratification of the Constitution, thereby winning the special admiration of George Washington. After taking office as president, Washington offered Marshall the post of attorney general. Marshall declined the appointment, as he did a later offer of the prestigious post of American minister to France, explaining that he preferred to stay in Richmond with his family and law practice.

He did agree, however, to go to Paris in 1798 as one of three envoys from President John Adams to the government of revolutionary France. He did this, in part, because he was assured that his duties in Paris would be temporary only, in part because he believed he could perform a real service for his country, helping to preserve peaceful relations between it and France during a time of unusual diplomatic tension.

After Marshall joined his colleagues Elbridge Gerry and Charles Pinckney in Paris, he was outraged to learn that the French government expected to be paid before it would receive the American emissaries. Marshall recognized the French request as a solicitation for a bribe (the recipients of the payments were mysteriously identified as “X,” “Y,” and “Z”), and he refused to consider it.

Thomas Jefferson, who was smitten with the ardor and ideals of the French Revolution, suspected that Marshall and his Federalist “cronies” were planning war with France to promote the interests of their friends in England. But the American people believed otherwise. When they received news of the “XYZ Affair,” they were outraged. “Millions for defense,” the newspapers thundered, “but not one cent for tribute!” When Marshall returned home in the summer of 1798, he was welcomed as a hero. In the elections of the following fall, he was sent to Congress as a Federalist representative from Richmond.

Jefferson was not pleased. He declined to attend a dinner honoring Marshall in Philadelphia and wrote worried letters to his friends. Though he deprecated his fellow Virginian’s popularity, alternatively attributing it to his “lax, lounging manners” and his “profound hypocrisy,” Jefferson knew that Marshall was a potentially dangerous adversary. A half-dozen years before the Richmonder’s triumphal return from Paris, Jefferson had written James Madison a cutting letter about Marshall that included words he would one day rue: “I think nothing better could be done than to make him a judge.”

In Congress, Marshall vigorously supported the Federalist policies of President John Adams. Adams took note of the Virginian’s ability in 1800 when he appointed him to the important post of secretary of state, a position that not only charged him with conduct of the



During John Marshall's years as chief justice, the Supreme Court occupied improvised chambers in the basement of the new capitol building in Washington. (Not for another century would the judicial branch of government have its own Supreme Court Building.) In Samuel F. B. Morse's 1821-22 scene in the capitol, above, Marshall and other visiting justices view the opening of a night session of the House of Representatives from a dais at left rear.

country's foreign affairs but also left him in effective charge of the government during Adams's frequent absences in Massachusetts.

John Marshall's future in government seemed rosy and secure in 1800. But the elections in November of that year changed all that, sweeping Adams and the Federalists from power and replacing them with Jefferson and the Democratic Republicans.

After the election, but before Adams's term as president expired, ailing Supreme Court Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth submitted his resignation. Casting about for a successor to Ellsworth, Adams sent John Jay's name to the Senate, only to have Jay demand that it be withdrawn. The thought of leaving the appointment of a new

chief justice to Jefferson was abhorrent to Adams, and the president was growing anxious. He summoned Marshall to his office to confer about the problem.

"Who shall I nominate now?" Adams asked dejectedly. Marshall answered that he did not know. He had previously suggested that Associate Justice William Paterson be elevated to the chief justiceship, but Adams had opposed Paterson then and Marshall supposed that he still did. The president pondered for a moment, then turned to Marshall and announced: "I believe I shall nominate you!"

Adams's statement astounded Marshall. Only two years before, Marshall had declined the president's offer of an associate justiceship, explaining that he still hoped to return to his law practice in Richmond. "I had never before heard myself named for the office," Marshall recalled later, "and had not even thought of it. I was pleased as well as surprized [sic], and bowed my head in silence."

Marshall's nomination was sent to the Senate and promptly confirmed, and on February 4, 1801, he took his seat as the nation's fourth chief justice. As subsequent events would prove, it was one of the most important dates in American history.

WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON in the Executive Mansion and John Marshall in the chief justice's chair, it was inevitable that the Supreme Court and the executive branch of the government should come into conflict. Marshall believed firmly in a strong national government and was willing to do all he could to strengthen federal institutions. Jefferson believed as firmly in state sovereignty and the necessity for maintaining constant vigilance against federal "usurpations." In legal matters, Jefferson believed that the Constitution should be interpreted strictly, so as to reduce rather than expand federal power.

Marshall, in contrast, believed that the Constitution should be construed fairly so as to carry out the intentions of its framers. Any law or executive act that violated the terms of the Constitution was, in Marshall's view, a nullity, of no force or effect; and it was the peculiar prerogative of the courts, as custodians of the laws of the land, to strike down any law that offended the Supreme Law of the Land.

Jefferson did not question the authority of the courts to decide whether a law or executive act violated the Constitution, but he believed that the other branches of the government also had a duty and a right to decide constitutional questions. In a controversy between the Supreme Court and the president, for example, the Supreme Court could order the president to do whatever the Court thought the Constitution required him to do; but the president could decide for himself whether the Supreme Court's order was proper and whether or not it should be obeyed.

As he took up the duties of the chief justiceship, Marshall contemplated his role with uncertainty. The Supreme Court in 1801 was certainly not the kind of strong, vital institution that might have been expected to provide direction in national affairs. There were six justices when Marshall joined the Court, but none (save the chief justice himself) was particularly distinguished. One or two men of national prominence had accepted appointment to the Court in the first eleven years of its existence, but none had remained there long. John Jay, the first chief justice, had resigned his seat in 1795 to become governor of New York. During the two years that John Rutledge was an associate justice, he had regarded the Court's business as so trifling that he did not bother to attend a single session, and he finally resigned to become chief justice of South Carolina. The Court itself had counted for so little when the new capitol at Washington was being planned that the architects had made no provision for either a courtroom or judges' chambers, and the justices (to everyone's embarrassment) found that they had to meet in a dingy basement room originally designed for the clerk of the Senate.

How could Chief Justice Marshall use his new office to further the legal principles in which he believed so strongly? How could he strengthen the weak and undeveloped federal judiciary when most of the nation's lawyers and judges regarded that judiciary as superfluous and unnecessary? How could he implement his view of

the Supreme Court as the final arbiter of constitutional questions when the President of the United States—his old nemesis, Thomas Jefferson—disagreed with that view so sharply? It was not an easy task, but John Marshall was a resourceful man, and he found a way to accomplish it.

His opportunity came in 1803 in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*. William Marbury was one of several minor federal judges who had been appointed during the closing days of John Adams's administration. When Jefferson's secretary of state, James Madison, refused to deliver the commissions of their offices, the judges sued Madison to compel delivery. In 1789, Congress had passed a law granting the Supreme Court authority to issue writs of mandamus, that is, legally enforceable orders compelling public officials to do their legal duties. Following the mandate of Congress, Marbury and the other appointees filed a petition for writ of mandamus in the Supreme Court.

Marshall pondered the possibilities of the case. He was sure that Marbury and his colleagues were entitled to their commissions, and he was just as sure that Jefferson and Madison had no intention of letting them have them. He could order Madison to deliver the commissions, but the secretary of state would certainly defy the order; and, as a practical matter, the Court could not compel obedience to any order that the president refused to acknowledge. Such an impasse would weaken, not strengthen, the federal union, and it would engender unprecedented controversy. No, there must be a better way. . . .

All eyes and ears in the capitol were trained on the lanky chief justice as he took his seat at the head of the high bench on February 24, 1803, and began to read the Supreme Court's opinion in *Marbury v. Madison*.

The evidence, Marshall said, clearly showed that Marbury and the other judges were entitled to their commissions. The commissions had been signed and sealed before John Adams left office and were, for all legal purposes, complete and effective. To withhold them, as Jefferson and Madison insisted on doing, was an illegal act. But the Supreme Court would not order the secretary of state to deliver the commissions because the law authorizing it to issue writs of mandamus was unconstitutional: the Constitution does not authorize the Supreme Court to issue writs of mandamus; in fact, it prohibits it from doing so. And any law that violates the Constitution is void. Since the law purporting to authorize the Supreme Court to act was unconstitutional, the Court would not—indeed, it could not—order Madison to do his legal duty.

If historians and constitutional lawyers were asked to name the single most important case ever decided in the United States Supreme Court, there is little doubt that the case would be *Marbury v. Madison*. Though the dispute that gave rise to the decision was in itself insignificant, John Marshall used it as a springboard to a great constitutional pronouncement. The rule of the

Continued on page 46

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Charles Atlas: “The World’s Most Perfectly

by Joseph Gustaitis

ONE DAY IN 1909, a skinny fifteen-year-old Italian immigrant boy named Angelo Siciliano took his girl to the beach at Coney Island. A brawny lifeguard kicked sand in his face. “I couldn’t do anything,” he later recalled, “and the girl felt funny.”

This story—reinterpreted in countless comic book and magazine advertisements—is so well known that it has acquired the aura of legend. But it really happened, and the lad who lived it became a legend, too. Many people are surprised to learn that he was also real and not just an advertising symbol and that he once actually was a ninety-seven-pound weakling. He never returned to repay the bully, but if, as has been said, “looking good is the best revenge,” Angelo Siciliano triumphed in a manner that the gods have allowed to few. He joined the pantheon himself—as Atlas. Charles Atlas.

Soon after his humiliating beach experience, Angelo and a group of other immigrant boys were taken to the Brooklyn Museum, which had an entrance hall crammed with antique statuary. “Where’d they get the models?” Angelo asked his guide. “They look fishy to me.”

“Why, Angelo, they were all ancient Greeks and Romans.”

“That’s okay, but how about the muscles?”

“Exercise, Angelo. It all came from exercise.”

A week later, Angelo was in the gym, but his physique did not respond—the muscles would not come. “Something was missing,” he recalled later. While pondering his failure, he went to the zoo, and there, as he watched the lion, the gods spoke. “Well, he [the lion] stretched himself all over,” Angelo remembered, “and the muscles ran around like rabbits under a rug. I says to myself, ‘Does this old gentleman have any barbells, and exercisers? No, sir. Then what’s he been doing?’ And it came over me. I said to myself, ‘He’s been pitting one muscle against another.’”

This was the insight the young man had been waiting for. It led to the exercise system eventually named “Dynamic Tension,” and it made Charles Atlas perhaps the most popular advocate of body building in the twentieth century.

Angelo Siciliano was born near the town of Aciri, Italy, on October 30, 1893. Charles Atlas was born

nineteen years later, when the new Angelo brought his leonine muscles, secretly developed at home, to the gym. He took off his shirt, a dozen boys froze, and one of them gulped, “Why, I’ll be darned if Angelo doesn’t look like that statue called Atlas on top of the bank on the corner.”

The body was now in place—the flesh *had* been willing—but the spirit was still undeveloped. What does one do with a great body? For a while Angelo earned five dollars a week bending railroad spikes in front of a Coney Island sideshow, sweeping the floor after the gawkers had gone. But sculptors (who had not yet discovered welding rods) still carved heroic statues, and one spied the young strongman on the beach. Soon “Atlas” was making one hundred dollars a week as New York’s most coveted male model. He even posed for a sculpture that eventually was placed in that same Brooklyn Museum and supplied the body for statues of Alexander Hamilton and George Washington—artistic license, of course, for these patriots never had Atlas’s physique.

In 1921 flamboyant fitness advocate Bernarr McFadden, who was promoting the cause through his magazine *Physical Culture*, held a contest to find the “World’s Most Perfectly Developed Man.” Atlas not only won it and a thousand dollar prize, but when he repeated the victory the next year, McFadden disgustingly cancelled future competitions. “What’s the use of holding them?” he asked. “Atlas will win every time.”

Atlas was now famous, and when his sculptor friends urged him to go into business, he started to sell his secrets by mail order and opened a gym. But business was poor until he met advertiser Charles P. Roman. Atlas knew how to develop muscles; Roman figured out how to sell them. He did not pitch health or larger arms, he sold *manhood*. When you signed on with Atlas, you did not enlist for fitness alone, you bought courage, self-reliance, and sex appeal—and you got the goods to deliver them.

Charles Atlas, Ltd., opened in 1929 and in that year sold three thousand courses at thirty dollars apiece (the price never increased). By the time of Atlas’s death, it

Suggested additional reading: Yours in Perfect Manhood: Charles Atlas by Charles Gaines (Simon and Schuster, 1982).

Developed Man"



BROWN BROTHERS, STERLING, PENNSYLVANIA

is estimated that over six million aspirants had signed up. The thirteen lessons were mailed over a twelve-week period. There were exercises aplenty, but enrollees also got advice on nutrition, sleep, and clean living.

"Dynamic Tension" was (and is) a method of resisting the movement of one set of muscles by opposing it by another. For example, fully extend your right arm, then grab your right wrist with your left hand. As you try to flex the arm, push down with your left hand, resisting the movement all the way. Do this enough,

and you get biceps like—well, almost like—Atlas's. Current isometric exercises are really just refinements of Atlas's original insight. The method's beauty was that it needed no equipment (a selling point during the Depression) and it could be done virtually anywhere. And it worked. Body builder Charles Gaines recently examined Atlas's recommendations and reported, "I've had no problem in locating the specific virtue in any of them." The Atlas course was diligent and perhaps difficult, but it was honest.

It had to be. It was a reflection of the man. Though he had nature's finest body and was a wealthy celebrity, Atlas was a quiet family man. He married in 1918, had two children, and lived modestly in a peaceful Brooklyn neighborhood. He liked good clothes, and he took his shirt off at the slightest prompting—not to show off but to spread the word of exercise and fitness.

"Live clean, think clean, and don't go to burlesque shows," was Atlas's advice, and he lived it faithfully. By all accounts, he was a contented man. "I got no worries," he said. "My health is perfect and the business no longer has any competition." But after his wife, Margaret, died in 1965, Atlas was never completely happy again. He even considered entering a monastery and maybe giving the brothers "some calisthenic exercises."

Still, he remained fit and his measurements never changed. (Atlas was five feet ten inches tall and weighed 180 pounds. His chest measured forty-seven inches in circumference, his waist thirty-four, and his biceps were as big as his neck—seventeen inches.) He spent most of his final years in Florida, trim and tan, and even in his seventies he never had sand kicked his way. He died of a heart attack on December 23, 1972.

It is unfortunate that Charles Atlas did not live to see today's fitness boom, for he left an enormous legacy. When the architect Christopher Wren died, his epitaph was placed in his St. Paul's Cathedral, and it reads, in translation from the Latin, "If you seek his monument, look around you." If you seek Charles Atlas's monument, go to any jogging track, health club, or gymnasium, where Americans by the millions are sweating to achieve the very ideal he urged. Just look around you. ★

Joseph Gustaitis, an Emmy Award-winning television writer, lives in Brooklyn, New York.

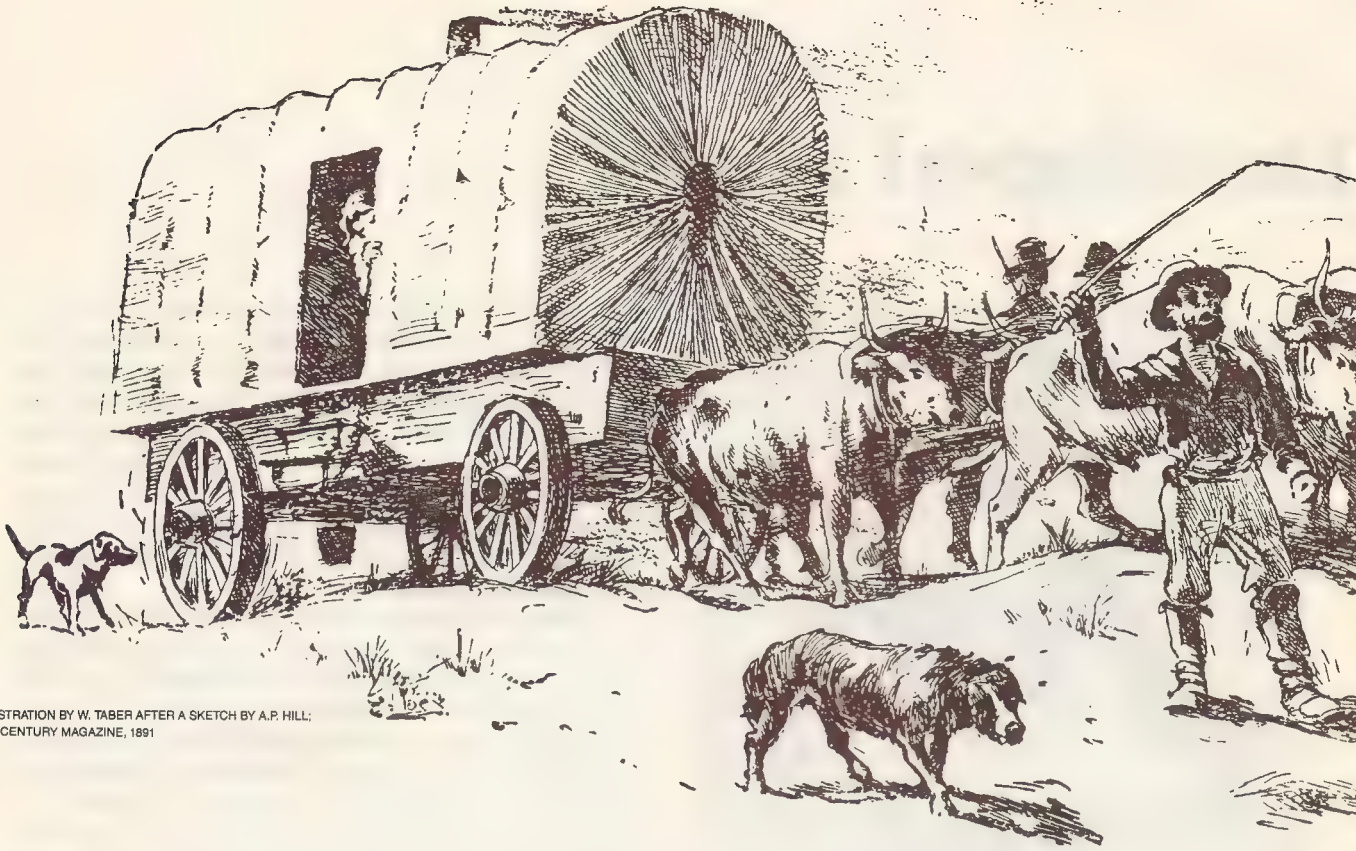


ILLUSTRATION BY W. TABER AFTER A SKETCH BY A.P. HILL;
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, 1891

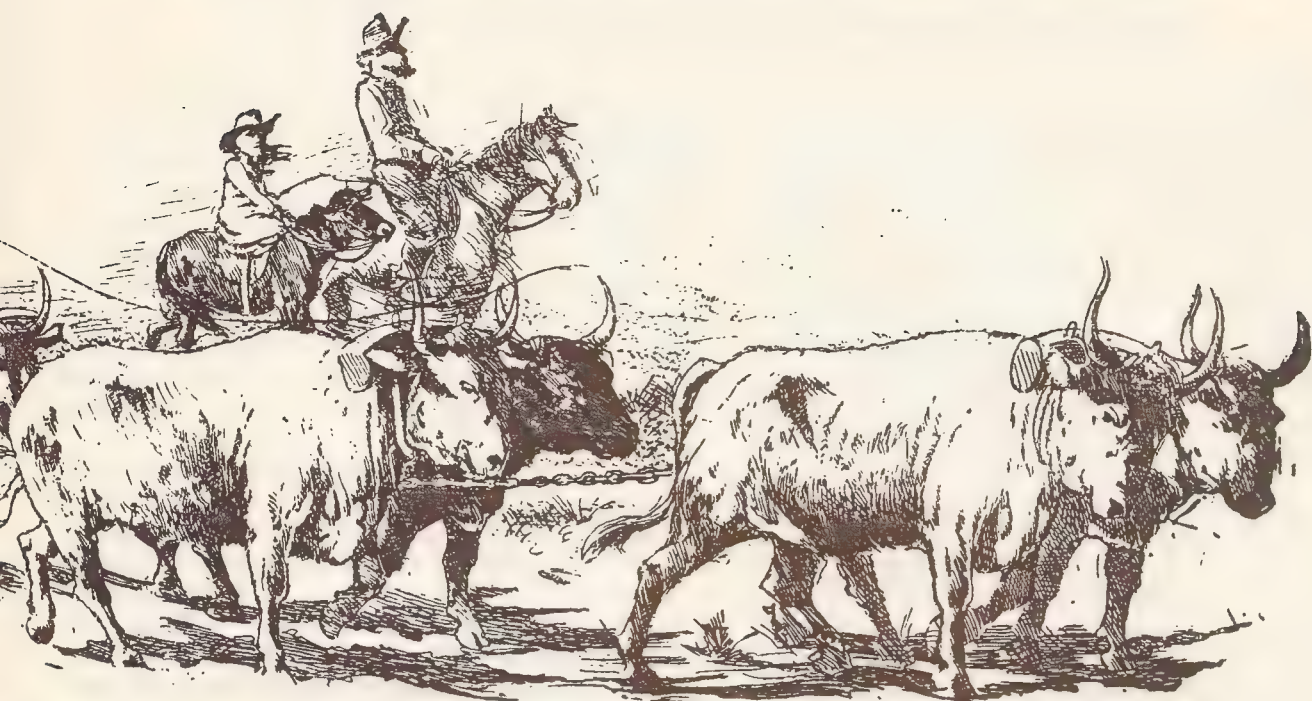
**A first-person account of privation, endurance, and courage
on the California Trail.**

A girl with the Donner Party

by Virginia Reed Murphy

Of all the pioneer treks over the Oregon and California trails, none was more tragically ill-fated than that of the Donner Party of 1846-47. Delayed when it attempted a nearly impassable short cut south of Utah's Salt Lake and then caught by early snows in the Sierra Nevada, nearly half of the eighty-nine-member emigrant party perished. Exhaustion, stress, and privation brought out the worst instincts in some of the pioneers, and tapped deep wells of courage in others. One of the survivors was twelve-year-old Virginia Reed, who, more than forty years later, wrote the following account of the journey. Her compelling narrative first appeared in the July 1891 issue of The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine.

Part I of Two Parts



I WAS A CHILD when we started to California, yet I remember the journey well and I have cause to remember it, as our little band of emigrants who drove out of Springfield, Illinois, that spring morning of 1846 have since been known in history as the "ill-fated Donner party" of "martyr pioneers." My father, James F. Reed, was the originator of the party, and the Donner brothers, George and Jacob, who lived just a little way out of Springfield, decided to join him.

All the previous winter we were preparing for the journey. Right here let me say that we suffered vastly more from fear of the Indians before starting than we did on the plains; at least this was my case. In the long winter evenings my grandmother, Sarah Keyes, used to tell me Indian stories. She had an aunt who had been taken prisoner by the savages in the early settlement of Virginia and Kentucky and had remained a captive in their hands five years before she made her escape. I was fond of these stories and evening after evening would go into grandma's room, sitting with my back close against the wall so that no warrior could slip behind me with a tomahawk. I would coax her to tell me more about her aunt, and would sit listening to the recital of the fearful deeds of the savages until it seemed to me that everything in the room, from the high old-fashioned bedposts down even to the shovel and tongs in the chimney corner, was transformed into the dusky tribe in paint and

feathers, all ready for the war dance. So when I was told that we were going to California and would have to pass through a region peopled by Indians, you can imagine how I felt.

Our wagons, or the "Reed wagons" as they were called, were all made to order and I can say without fear of contradiction that nothing else like our family wagon ever started across the plains. It was what might be called a two-story wagon or "pioneer palace car," attached to a regular immigrant train. My mother, though a young woman, was not strong and had been in delicate health for many years, yet when sorrows and dangers came upon her she was the bravest of the brave. Grandma Keyes, who was seventy-five years of age, was an invalid, confined to her bed. Her sons in Springfield, Gersham and James W. Keyes, tried to dissuade her from the long and fatiguing journey, but in vain; she would not be parted from my mother, who was her only daughter. So the car in which she was to ride was planned to give comfort. The entrance was on the side, like that of an old-fashioned stagecoach, and one stepped into a small room, as it were, in the center of the wagon. At the right and left were spring seats with comfortable high backs, where one could sit and ride with as much ease as on the seats of a Concord coach.

A board about a foot wide extended over the wheels on either side the full length of the wagon, thus forming

**“As soon as we stopped traveling grandma began to fail,
and on the twenty-ninth of May she died.”**

the foundation for a large and roomy second story in which were placed our beds. Under the spring seats were compartments in which were stored many articles useful for the journey, such as a well-filled work basket and a full assortment of medicines, with [liniment] and bandages for dressing wounds. Our clothing was packed—not in Saratoga trunks—but in strong canvas bags plainly marked. Some of mama’s young friends added a looking-glass, hung directly opposite the door, in order, as they said, that my mother might not forget to keep her good looks, and strange to say, when we had to leave this wagon, standing like a monument on the Salt Lake desert, the glass was still unbroken.

We had two wagons loaded with provisions. Everything in that line was bought that could be thought of. My father started with supplies enough to last us through the first winter in California, had we made the journey in the usual time of six months. Knowing that books were always scarce in a new country, we also took a good library of standard works. We even took a cooking stove which never had had a fire in it, and was destined never to have, as we cached it in the desert. Certainly no family ever started across the plains with more provisions or a better outfit for the journey; and yet we reached California almost destitute and nearly out of clothing.

The family wagon was drawn by four yoke of oxen, large Durham steers at the wheel. The other wagons were drawn by three yoke each. We had saddle horses and cows, and last but not least my pony. He was a beauty and his name was Billy. I can scarcely remember when I was taught to sit on a horse. I only know that when a child of seven I was the proud owner of a pony and used to go riding with papa. That was the chief pleasure to which I looked forward in crossing the plains, to ride my pony every day. But a day came when I had no pony to ride—the poor little fellow gave out. He could not endure the hardships of ceaseless travel. When I was forced to part with him I cried until I was ill, and sat in the back of the wagon watching him become smaller and smaller as we drove on, until I could see him no more.

NEVER CAN I FORGET the morning when we bade farewell to kindred and friends. The Donners were there, having driven in the evening before with their families so that we might get an early start. Grandma Keyes was carried out of the house and placed in the wagon on a large feather bed, propped up with pillows. Her sons implored her to remain and end her days with them, but she could not be separated from her only daughter. We were surrounded by loved ones, and there stood all my little schoolmates who had come to kiss me good-bye. My father with tears in his eyes tried to smile as one

friend after another grasped his hand in a last farewell. Mama was overcome with grief. At last we were all in the wagons, the drivers cracked their whips, the oxen moved slowly forward, and the long journey had begun.

Could we have looked into the future and have seen the misery before us, these lines would never have been written. But we were full of hope and did not dream of sorrow. I can now see our little caravan of ten or twelve wagons as we drove out of old Springfield, my little black-eyed sister Patty sitting upon the bed, holding up the wagon cover so that grandma might have a last look at her old home.

That was the fourteenth day of April, 1846. Our party numbered thirty-one, and consisted chiefly of three families, the other members being young men, some of whom came as drivers. The Donner family were George and Tamsen Donner and their five children, and Jacob and Elizabeth Donner and their seven children. Our family numbered nine, not counting three drivers—my father and mother, James F. and Margaret W. Reed; Grandma Keyes; my little sister Patty and two little brothers, James F. Reed, Jr., and Thomas K. Reed; Eliza Williams and her brother Baylis; and lastly myself. Eliza had been a domestic in our family for many years, and was anxious to see California.

Many friends camped with us the first night out, and my uncles traveled on for several days before bidding us a final farewell. It seemed strange to be riding in ox-teams, and we children were afraid of the oxen, thinking they could go wherever they pleased as they had no bridles. Milt Elliott, a knight of the whip, drove our family wagon. He had worked for years in my father’s large sawmill on the Sangamon River. The first bridge we came to, Milt had to stop the wagon and let us out. I remember that I called to him to be sure to make the oxen hit the bridge, and not to forget that grandma was in the wagon. How he laughed at the idea of the oxen missing the bridge! I soon found that Milt, with his “whoa,” “haw,” and “gee,” could make the oxen do just as he pleased.

Nothing of much interest happened until we reached what is now Kansas. The first Indians we met were the Caws, who kept the ferry, and had to take us over the Caw River. I watched them closely, hardly daring to draw my breath and feeling sure they would sink the boat in the middle of the stream, and was very thankful when I found they were not like grandma’s Indians.

Every morning, when the wagons were ready to start, papa and I would jump on our horses and go ahead to pick out a camping ground. In our party were many who rode on horseback, but mama seldom did; she preferred the wagon and did not like to leave grandma, although Patty took upon herself this charge and could hardly be persuaded to leave grandma’s side. Our little home was



Virginia Reed's grandmother was only one of thousands who perished on the Oregon and California trails. The journey was fraught with hazards, and estimates indicate that as many as one in ten pioneers died from accident or sickness on the trip west. William Ranney's "The Prairie Burial" reflects the pathos of one family's last farewell to a loved one.

so comfortable that mama could sit reading and chatting with the little ones and almost forget that she was really crossing the plains.

Grandma Keyes improved in health and spirits every day until we came to the Big Blue River, which was so swollen that we could not cross but had to lie by and make rafts on which to take the wagons over. As soon as we stopped traveling grandma began to fail, and on the twenty-ninth day of May she died. It seemed hard to bury her in the wilderness and travel on, and we were afraid that the Indians would destroy her grave, but her death here, before our troubles began, was providential, and nowhere on the whole road could we have found so beautiful a resting place.

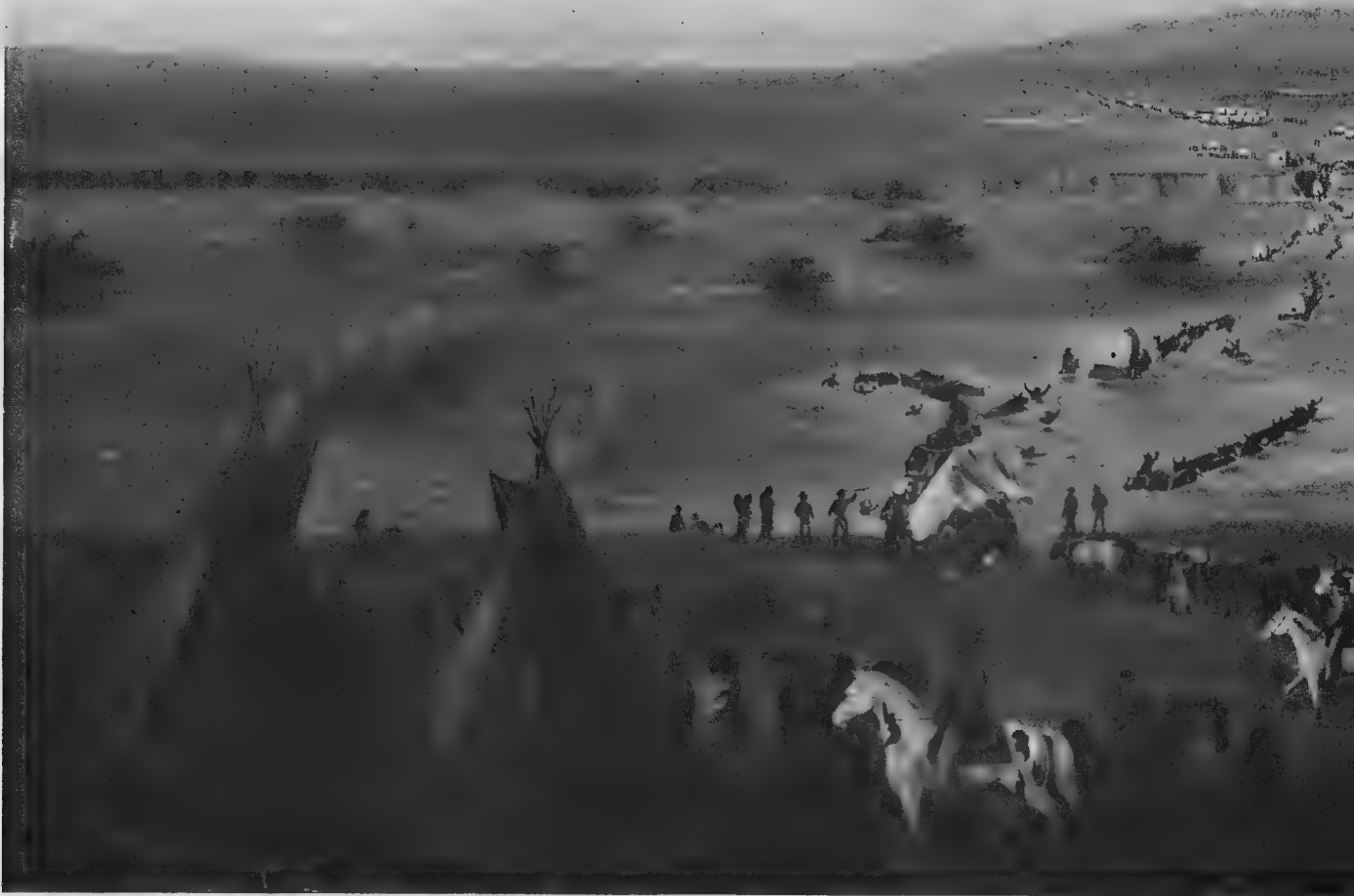
By this time many emigrants had joined our company, and all turned out to assist at the funeral. A coffin was hewn out of a cottonwood tree, and John Denton, a young man from Springfield, found a large gray stone on which he carved with deep letters the name of "Sarah Keyes; born in Virginia," giving age and date of birth.

She was buried under the shade of an oak, the slab being placed at the foot of the grave, on which were planted wild flowers growing in the sod. A minister in our party, the Rev. J. A. Cornwall, tried to give words of comfort as we stood about this lonely grave. Strange to say, that grave has never been disturbed; the wilderness blossomed into the city of Manhattan, Kansas, and we have been told that the city cemetery surrounds the grave of Sarah Keyes.*

AS THE BIG BLUE RIVER remained high and there was no prospect of fording it, the men went to work cutting down trees, hollowing out logs, and making rafts on which to take the wagons over. These logs, about twenty-five feet in length, were united by cross-timbers, forming rafts, which were firmly lashed to stakes driven into the bank. Ropes were attached to both ends, by which the rafts were pulled back and forth across the river.

The banks of this stream being steep, our heavily laden wagons had to be let down carefully with ropes, so that the wheels might run into the hollowed logs. This

**The author here was in error. The ford on the Big Blue River where Sarah Keyes was buried is more than thirty miles north of Manhattan, Kansas. The exact location of her grave, now lost, is believed to be in or around Little Alcove Spring State Park, near Marysville, Kansas.*



was no easy task when you take into consideration that in these wagons were women and children, who could cross the rapid river in no other way. Finally the dangerous work was accomplished and we resumed our journey.

The road at first was rough and led through a timbered country, but after striking the great valley of the Platte the road was good and the country beautiful. Stretching out before us as far as the eye could reach was a valley as green as emerald, dotted here and there with flowers of every imaginable color, and through this valley flowed the grand old Platte, a wide, rapid, shallow stream. Our company now numbered about forty wagons, and for a time we were commanded by Col. William H. Russell, then by George Donner.

Exercise in the open air under bright skies, and freedom from peril combined to make this part of our journey an ideal pleasure trip. How I enjoyed riding my pony, galloping over the plain, gathering wild flowers! At night the young folks would gather about the campfire chatting merrily, and often a song would be heard, or some clever dancer would give us a barn-door jig on

the hind gate of a wagon.

Traveling up the smooth valley of the Platte, we passed Court House Rock, Chimney Rock, and Scott's Bluffs, and made from fifteen to twenty miles a day, shortening or lengthening the distance in order to secure a good camping ground. At night when we drove into camp, our wagons were placed so as to form a circle or corral, into which our cattle were driven, after grazing, to prevent the Indians from stealing them, the campfires and tents being on the outside.

There were many expert riflemen in the party, and we never lacked for game. The plains were alive with buffalo, and herds could be seen every day coming to the Platte to drink. The meat of the young buffalo is excellent and so is that of the antelope, but the antelope are so fleet of foot it is difficult to get a shot at one.

I witnessed many a buffalo hunt and more than once was in the chase close beside my father. A buffalo will not attack one unless wounded. When he sees the hunter he raises his shaggy head, gazes at him for a moment, then turns and runs; but when he is wounded he will face his pursuer. The only danger lay in a stampede, for noth-



ing could withstand the onward rush of those massive creatures, whose tread seemed to shake the prairie.

Antelope and buffalo steaks were the main article on our bill-of-fare for weeks, and no tonic was needed to give zest for the food; our appetites were a marvel. Eliza soon discovered that cooking over a campfire was far different from cooking on a stove or range, but all hands assisted her. I remember that she had the cream all ready for the churn as we drove into the South Fork of the Platte, and while we were fording the grand old stream she went on with her work and made several pounds of butter.

We found no trouble in crossing the Platte, the only danger being in quicksand. The stream being wide, we had to stop the wagon now and then to give the oxen a few moments' rest.

At Fort Laramie, two hundred miles farther on, we celebrated the Fourth of July in fine style. Camp was pitched earlier than usual and we prepared a grand dinner. Some of my father's friends in Springfield had given him a bottle of good old brandy, which he agreed to drink at a certain hour of this day, looking to the east,

The Platte River Valley provided a natural route for a portion of the overland trail, and the South Platte crossing was a principal landmark of the journey west. Artist-photographer William Henry Jackson's 1867 painting above shows the ford much as it probably appeared to Virginia Reed twenty-one years earlier.

while his friends in Illinois were to drink a toast to his success from a companion bottle with their faces turned west, the difference in time being carefully estimated; and at the hour agreed upon, the health of our friends in Springfield was drunk with great enthusiasm.

At Fort Laramie was a party of Sioux, who were on the war path going to fight the Crows or Blackfeet. The Sioux are fine-looking Indians, and I was not in the least afraid of them. They fell in love with my pony and set about bargaining to buy him. They brought buffalo robes and beautifully tanned buckskin, pretty beaded moccasins, and ropes made of grass, and placing these articles in a heap alongside several of the ponies, they made my father understand by signs that they would give them all for Billy and his rider. Papa smiled and



shook his head; then the number of ponies was increased and, as a last tempting inducement, they brought an old coat that had been worn by some poor soldier, thinking my father could not withstand the brass buttons!

On the sixth of July we were again on the march. The Sioux were several days in passing our caravan, not on account of the length of our train but because there were so many Sioux. Owing to the fact that our wagons were

strung so far apart, they could have massacred our whole party without much loss to themselves. Some of our company became alarmed, and the rifles were cleaned out and loaded to let the warriors see that we were prepared to fight; but the Sioux never showed any inclination to disturb us.

Their curiosity was annoying, however, and our wagon with its conspicuous stovepipe and looking-glass attracted their attention. They were continually swarm-



ing about trying to get a look at themselves in the mirror, and their desire to possess my pony was so strong that at last I had to ride in the wagon and let one of the drivers take charge of Billy. This I did not like, and in order to see how far back the line of warriors extended, I picked up a large field-glass which hung on a rack, and as I pulled it out with a click, the warriors jumped back, wheeled their ponies and scattered. This pleased me greatly, and I told my mother I could fight the whole

Samuel Colman's painting captures the essence of the overland trail: amidst lonely expanses of stark grandeur, a wagon train heads west toward the Promised Land.

Sioux tribe with a spy-glass, and as revenge for forcing me to ride in the wagon, whenever they came near trying to get a peep at their war paint and feathers, I would raise the glass and laugh to see them dart away in terror.



A NEW ROUTE had just been opened by Lansford W. Hastings, called the "Hastings Cut-off," which passed along the southern shore of the Great Salt Lake, rejoining the old "Fort Hall Emigrant" road on the Humboldt. It was said to shorten the distance three hundred miles. [At Fort Bridger in southwest Wyoming] much time was lost in debating which course to pursue; [Jim] Bridger and [Louis Vasquez], who were in charge of the fort, sounded the praises of the new road.

My father was so eager to reach California that he was quick to take advantage of any means to shorten the distance, and we were assured by Hastings that the only bad part was the forty-mile drive through the desert by the shore of the lake. None of our party knew then, as we learned afterwards, that these men had an interest in the road, being employed by Hastings. But for the advice of these parties we should have continued on the old Fort Hall road.

Our company had increased in numbers all along the line and was now composed of some of the very best people and some of the worst. The greater portion of our company went by the old road and reached California in safety. Eighty-seven persons took the "Hastings Cut-off," including the Donners, Breens, Reeds, Murphys, C.T. Stanton, John Denton, William McClutchen, William Eddy, Louis Keseburg, and many others too numerous to mention. And these are the unfortunates who have since been known as the "Donner Party."

On the morning of July 31 we parted with our traveling companions, some of whom had become very dear friends, and, without a suspicion of impending disaster,

Like James and Margaret Reed, many a California-bound family experienced calamity on the parched alkali wastelands of Utah and Nevada. The shimmering deserts of the Great Basin were unforgiving of miscalculation, and as Charles C. Nahl's 1857 painting above suggests, attempting a desert crossing with an overloaded wagon, worn-out oxen, or inadequate reserves of water could be disastrous.

set off in high spirits on the "Hastings Cut-off"; but a few days showed us that the road was not as it had been represented. We were seven days in reaching Weber Canyon, and Hastings, who was guiding a party in advance of our train, left a note by the wayside warning us that the road through Weber Canyon was impassable and advising us to elect a road over the mountains, the outline of which he attempted to give on paper.

These directions were so vague that C.T. Stanton, William Pike, and my father rode in advance and overtook Hastings and tried to induce him to return and guide our party. He refused, but came back over a portion of the road, and from a high mountain endeavored to point out the general course. Over this road my father traveled alone, taking notes, and blazing trees to assist him in retracing his course, and reaching camp after an absence of four days. Learning of the hardships of the advance train, the party decided to cross towards the lake.

Only those who have passed through this country on horseback can appreciate the situation. There was absolutely no road, not even a trail. The canyon wound around among the hills. Heavy underbrush had to be cut

“My father had not been gone long before the oxen began to fall to the ground from thirst and exhaustion.”

away and used for making a roadbed. While cutting our way step by step through the “Hastings Cut-off,” we were joined by the Graves family, consisting of W.F. Graves, his wife and eight children, his son-in-law Jay Fosdick, and a young man by the name of John Snyder.

Finally we reached the end of the canyon, where it looked as though our wagons would have to be abandoned. It seemed impossible for the oxen to pull them up the steep hill and the bluffs beyond, but we doubled teams and the work was at last accomplished, almost every yoke in the train being required to pull up each wagon. While in this canyon Stanton and Pike came into camp; they had suffered greatly on account of the exhaustion of their horses and had come near perishing.

WORN WITH TRAVEL and greatly discouraged, we finally reached the shore of the Great Salt Lake. It had taken an entire month, instead of a week, and our cattle were not fit to cross the desert.

We were now encamped in a valley called “Twenty Wells.” The water in these wells was pure and cold, welcome enough after the alkaline pools from which we had been forced to drink. We prepared for the long drive across the desert and laid in, as we supposed, an ample supply of water and grass.

This desert had been represented to us as only forty miles wide, but we found it nearer eighty. It was a dreary, desolate, alkali waste; not a living thing could be seen; it seemed as though the hand of death had been laid upon the country. We started in the evening and traveled all that night and the following day and night—two nights and one day of suffering from thirst and heat by day and piercing cold by night.

When the third night fell and we saw the barren waste stretching away apparently as boundless as when we started, my father determined to go ahead in search of water. Before starting he instructed the drivers, if the cattle showed signs of giving out, to take them from the wagons and follow him. He had not been gone long before the oxen began to fall to the ground from thirst and exhaustion. They were unhitched at once and driven ahead. My father, coming back, met the drivers with the cattle within ten miles of water and instructed them to return as soon as the animals had satisfied their thirst. We waited all that day in the desert looking for the return of our drivers, the other wagons going on out of sight. Towards night the situation became desperate, and we had only a few drops of water left; another night meant death. We must set out on foot and try to reach some of the wagons.

Can I ever forget that night in the desert, when we walked mile after mile in the darkness, every step seeming to be the very last we could take! Suddenly all fatigue was banished by fear; through the night came a swift

rushing sound of one of the young steers, crazed by thirst and apparently bent upon our destruction. My father, holding his youngest child in his arms and keeping us all close behind him, drew his pistol, but finally the maddened beast turned and dashed off into the darkness.

Dragging ourselves along about ten miles, we reached the wagon of Jacob Donner. The family were all asleep, so we children lay down on the ground. A bitter wind swept over the desert, chilling us through and through. We crept closer together, and, when we complained of the cold, papa placed all five of our dogs around us, and were it not for the warmth of these faithful creatures we should doubtless have perished.

At daylight papa was off to learn the fate of his cattle and was told that all were lost, except one cow and an ox. The stock, scenting the water, had rushed on ahead of the men, and had probably been stolen by the Indians.

A week was spent here on the edge of the desert in a fruitless search. Almost every man in the company turned out, hunting in all directions, but our eighteen head of cattle were never found. We had lost our best yoke of oxen before reaching Bridger’s Fort from drinking poisoned water found standing in pools, and had bought at the fort two yoke of young steers, but now all were gone, and my father and his family were left in the desert, eight hundred miles from California, seemingly helpless.

We realized that our wagons must be abandoned. The company kindly let us have two yoke of oxen, so with our ox and cow yoked together we could bring one wagon, but, alas! not the one which seemed so much like a home to us, and in which grandma had died.

Some of the company went back with papa and assisted him in caching everything that could not be packed in one wagon. A cache was made by digging a hole in the ground, in which a box or the bed of a wagon was placed. Articles to be buried were packed into this box, covered with boards, and the earth thrown in upon them, and thus they were hidden from sight. Our provisions were divided among the company.

Before leaving the desert camp, an inventory of provisions on hand was taken, and it was found that the supply was not sufficient to last us through to California, and as if to render the situation more terrible, a storm came on during the night and the hilltops became white with snow. Someone must go on to Sutter’s Fort after provisions. A call was made for volunteers. C.T. Stanton and William McClutchen bravely offered their services and started on, bearing letters from the company to Captain Sutter asking for relief. ★

Virginia Reed Murphy’s narrative will conclude in the October issue of American History Illustrated.

Even Wall Street reeled when Edward H. Harriman and James J. Hill engaged in a “for keeps” struggle over a railroad.

Giants in Collision: The Northern Pacific Panic of 1901

by Howard Schutz

THE NORTHERN PACIFIC PANIC of 1901 resulted from a few clever men doing what a few other clever men “knew” could not be done. What the first few did and how they got themselves into a position to do it makes an interesting story, both because of the intrigue involved and because the incident was a “growing pain” in the building of America.

The half-century after the Civil War was the greatest railroad-building period in American history. Between 1880 and 1905 numerous rail conglomerates came into existence when many of the country’s original lines, which had been hastily and flimsily built, were absorbed by other companies. Rising into prominence during these years were three powerful men who would influence the future direction of America’s railroads: James J. Hill, J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr., and Edward Henry Harriman. And in 1901 Hill, Morgan, and Harriman became the leading figures in a struggle over control of one of those railroads—a conflict that would inadvertently trigger a memorable panic on Wall Street and bring losses and ruin to hundreds of stock investors and speculators.

J. Pierpont Morgan, who would play a supporting role in this drama, was America’s most powerful banker. Having successfully consolidated and reorganized dozens of

once-ailing or impoverished railroads, Morgan owned controlling interest in many of the country’s major lines. Unlike Hill and Harriman, his interest in railroads was strictly financial.

The other two men—the leading actors in the confrontation—had surprisingly similar histories:

James Jerome Hill was born in 1838 in Rockwood, Ontario, Canada, not far from the U.S. border. Soon after reaching manhood he emigrated to St. Paul, Minnesota, the commercial headwaters of the Mississippi River. There he worked for railroads, learned the transportation business, and for several years operated a successful steamship line. In 1878, when he was forty years old, Hill and three associates bought and reorganized the bankrupt St. Paul & Pacific Railroad and extended it west to Puget Sound. By 1890 the line had grown solidly and acquired so many feeders that its name was changed to the Great Northern.

During the financial panic of 1893 the Great Northern’s major competitor, the Northern Pacific, was forced into receivership. Hill, sensing a chance to pick up a bargain,

searched for financial backing and thus crossed paths with J. Pierpont Morgan, then of Drexel, Morgan & Company. Morgan’s bank and the Deutsche Bank of Germany worked out a plan in which Hill took \$16 million of the reorganization stock. By 1900, the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific railroads were operating virtually as one and were known as the “Hill lines.” (Morgan knew where his expertise ended; he left the operating of the lines to Hill.)

Meanwhile, in another corner of the arena stood Edward H. Harriman, son of an Episcopal minister. During his middle teens, before the invention of the stock ticker, Harriman had secured a job on Wall Street as a “pad shover,” carrying the latest stock market quotations to the broker’s potential customers and bringing back orders. In 1870, at twenty-two, he borrowed three thousand dollars from a wealthy uncle and bought his own seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

Harriman first entered the transportation business in 1877 with his purchase of a small Hudson River boat, the *Twilight*, which ran between Newburgh, New York, and New York City. Harriman’s interest in railroads came sooner than Hill’s, probably as a result of his marriage to the daughter of the president of the Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain

Suggested additional reading: Panic on Wall Street: A History of America’s Financial Disasters by Robert Sobel (Macmillan, 1968).



Edward H. Harriman's unassuming appearance masked a shrewd and daring mind, and the railroad magnate did not hesitate to take on two other giants of American railroading in his quest to expand his transportation empire.

Railway. This turned his attention toward upstate New York and, in 1881, toward a small, badly managed railroad spanning the thirty-four miles between Stanley and Great Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario. The "Sodus Bay & Southern," as Harriman's reorganized line became known, had an importance out of proportion to its short length because it served as a connector between the New York Central and Pennsylvania railroads. After introducing many improvements, Harriman sold the short line to the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1884. In the two decades between his entrance into the railroad business and the Northern Pacific "panic" episode of 1901,

Harriman successively gained control over the Illinois Central (1882), Union Pacific (1897), Kansas City Southern (1889), and Southern Pacific (1901) railroads.

Neither Harriman nor Hill had a formal technical education, but both were fast learners. Both had "backed" into the railroad business by first buying a steamboat, then had gone on to railroads after they were thirty. However, the two men also had some significant differences. A well-known New York banker once observed, "If I were asked what is the key to Harriman's success, I should say that he is the only man I have ever known who is just as familiar with the physical as

the financial side of his properties . . . Hill is a great traffic man and railroad builder, but he is a baby when he gets into Wall Street. Harriman knows both ends of the game and knows them well. He is his own banker and his own traffic manager, and the combination is irresistible."

BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY the two rivals controlled most of the key railroads in the west, with Hill's Great Northern/Northern Pacific in the north and Harriman's Union Pacific in the south.

More or less in between Hill and Harriman's territories lay the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, ripe for takeover. Both men

saw that ownership of the Burlington would give their lines much-needed access to Chicago and the east, and each realized that it would provide doubly troublesome competition should the other control it.

In the spring of 1900, Harriman began purchasing Burlington stock on the open market. At about the same time, Morgan authorized Hill to "go ahead and see what [he] could do with the Burlington." Bypassing the stock market, Hill opened direct negotiations with the president and directors of the railroad and successfully arranged to purchase half-interest in the line.

As soon as Harriman realized that he had been outmaneuvered, he arranged to meet with Hill at the home of a mutual friend in New York City. He asked that the Union Pacific be given a chance to buy one-third of the Great Northern/Northern Pacific's pending interest in the Burlington, for which the Union Pacific would furnish one-third of the price. Hill, however, declined to consider the proposal. Harriman's reported reaction was, "Very well, it is a hostile act and you must take the consequences."

By the spring of 1901 Hill and Morgan had managed to buy not half, but 96.79 percent of the Burlington stock at a price of \$215 million. Morgan, satisfied that matters were well in hand, sailed for Italy, and Hill headed toward the North-west to oversee his properties there.

What happened then was one of the more unbelievable episodes in financial history. In effect, Harriman said to Hill and Morgan (though not directly), "All right, if you won't cut us in on your new subsidiary, we'll acquire control of you!"

The daring plan Harriman conceived was to covertly buy controlling interest in the Northern Pacific itself, thereby automatically obtaining the share in the Burlington he wanted. Such a takeover was possible because, although Morgan and Hill had controlling interest in the Northern Pacific, they actually owned only about twenty-five percent of the stock; the other seventy-five percent was split among a number of small shareholders.

Harriman already had personal

access to much of the \$78 million or so needed for a takeover bid. But he would still need help, and for this he turned to his investment bankers, Kuhn, Loeb & Company of New York. Jacob Schiff, president of Kuhn, Loeb, would be Harriman's chief ally in his raid on the Northern Pacific.

Early in April 1901, Kuhn, Loeb and its agents quietly began buying up shares of Northern Pacific stock on the open market. By April 15 Schiff had turned over to Harriman 150,000 shares of common stock and 100,000 shares of preferred. (In the Northern Pacific charter, both common and preferred stock had equal voting rights, not the typical situation today.)

Wall Street took some notice of the increased traffic in Northern Pacific stocks, but did not recognize it as the raid it was. When the buying began, Northern Pacific common was selling at 102 and preferred at 101. By the time of the April 15 turnover, the two stocks had advanced to 131 and 109.

Hill would later admit that at that point he had not yet grown concerned over any possible threat to his railroad, since the Hill/Morgan interests controlled some \$35 million in Northern Pacific stocks. In fact, the Northern Pacific and its subsidiaries were even enticed into selling more than twenty thousand shares of their own stock to Harriman's agents!

But by the end of April, Hill, then in Seattle, finally became suspicious. He ordered the Great Northern traffic managers to give him the fastest possible train east, with priority over all other traffic. Making a record run across the country, he arrived in New York on Friday, May 3, and went immediately to Kuhn, Loeb. If anyone knew where the railroad stock action was coming from, Schiff would—and of course he did. Schiff frankly admitted that Kuhn, Loeb was buying the shares for the Union Pacific, and he claimed that Harriman had in fact already obtained controlling interest.

ALTHOUGH HILL DOUBTED that it was really possible for anyone to buy control of the Northern Pacific on the open market, he never-



THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE, NEW YORK CITY

James J. Hill found his control of the Northern Pacific and Burlington railroads endangered by Harriman's raid on Northern Pacific stocks.

theless was sufficiently alarmed to go to Morgan & Company and have one of Morgan's partners cable the financier in Italy, requesting authority to buy 150,000 additional shares of Northern Pacific stock, preferably the common. The cablegram was sent after the close of business on Saturday, May 4. (The New York Stock Exchange then operated a half-day on Saturday, a practice that ceased on September 29, 1952.) Harriman, in the meantime, asked Kuhn, Loeb to buy forty thousand more shares for him.

Hill wanted to purchase common stock, even though both common and preferred had voting rights, because deep in the fine print of the Northern Pacific charter was a proviso permitting the company's management to retire (pay off and abolish) the preferred stock on the following January 1. If during a takeover bid the company's controllers should find themselves in control of a majority of the common stock, but not of the common-plus-preferred, it would then be to their advantage to stall until they could legally retire the preferred stocks, even at considerable cost.

This, it turned out, was exactly the situation that developed. Harriman and the Union Pacific had purchased a total of 781,080 shares of common and preferred stocks—about six thousand more than half of the existing total. Some later analysts of the situation have said that Harriman should have seen the Union Pacific's weakness with respect to preferred stock. But he had; that was why he gave the order to buy the additional forty thousand shares of Northern Pacific common.

But two things went wrong. Harriman was ill with appendicitis and was masterminding this phase of the campaign from his sickbed. And although he issued the forty-thousand-share order to Kuhn, Loeb, it arrived on Saturday morning, when Schiff was out of the office worshipping at his synagogue. The assistant receiving the order realizing its potential importance and relayed it to Schiff, but the banker countermanded the order, apparently assuming that with more than half of the total Northern Pacific shares, the Union Pacific was home free. ♦

By Tuesday, May 17, agents for Morgan & Company had obtained most of their needed 150,000 shares of Northern Pacific stock, in the process bidding the price up from 112 to 149¾. Even before it hit this temporary high—but especially then—the short sellers entered the picture. A “short” sale occurs when a person sells a stock he does not then own but guarantees to deliver at some agreed-upon future date. He does this ordinarily because he expects the current price to drop, permitting him to buy at a reduced price near or on the required delivery date. His profit is then the difference between the agreed-upon price and the price he actually has to pay. But if the market, instead of dropping, goes up and is nearly cleaned out of the item, the person owning the stock can just about name his own price. If the stock becomes totally unavailable, a panic results; someone has cornered the market, and many people will have to default on their contracts.

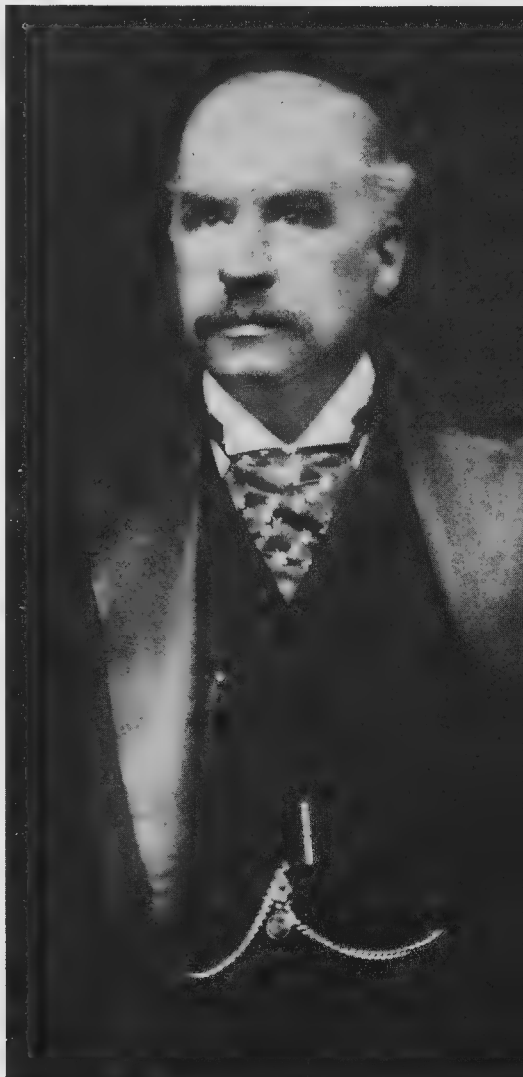
Telegrams and phone calls began flying all over the country; cablegrams went back and forth across the Atlantic to England, Germany, and the Netherlands: “Get those stock certificates over here; we must cover our short sales!”

Tension on Wall Street increased on Wednesday, as short sellers scrambled for rapidly dwindling—and increasingly expensive—blocks of Northern Pacific stock to cover their previous sales. Simultaneously, prices for most other stocks began to slump drastically as the speculators sold holdings to gain capital for their Northern Pacific purchases.

By Thursday, May 9, the floor was in a virtual panic. Offers for Northern Pacific stock soared to an incredible one thousand dollars per share, but the supply had completely dried up; the market was cornered. As the prices on other stocks collapsed, hundreds of small investors were bankrupted, and the very survival of major brokerage houses was threatened.

Total chaos was finally averted on Thursday afternoon when the bankers for the two warring railroads declared a temporary truce and agreed to lend Northern Pacific stocks to some short sellers and to delay call-

BROWN BROTHERS, STERLING, PENNSYLVANIA



J. Pierpont Morgan, America's leading financier and an associate of Hill's, played a supporting role in the struggle over the Northern Pacific.

ing in short-sold shares from others. By closing time, Northern Pacific shares had stabilized at 325, a gain of 165 points for the day.

Usually if someone is attempting to corner the market he does this deliberately to make money on the short sellers. But the Northern Pacific Panic, as the situation became known, was a bit different. The market was drained of Northern Pacific stock because two powerful opponents were engaged in a "for keeps" struggle for control of a company, and neither could afford to risk its outcome for the sake of picking up a few quick dollars.

Which side really brought about the corner? Hill denied that his group had. "I never bought or sold a share of stock for gambling purposes in my life, and I don't want to earn money wrung from people by a 'corner,'" he said. Harriman and Kuhn, Loeb pointed out that they had made no stock purchases after Friday, May 3 (albeit unintentionally), and that the corner panic had not begun until four days later. If anyone really created the panic, Morgan & Company did by buying their last 150,000 shares after the Harriman group had stopped.

ALTHOUGH HARRIMAN'S GROUP had the bare stock majority in the Northern Pacific, it had failed to obtain a majority of the common stock, and Harriman accepted an invitation to negotiate. Repeated conferences between the two rival groups finally resulted in an announcement that the composition of the new Northern Pacific board of directors was to be left to J.P. Morgan personally. Morgan knew that trying to name a board lopsidedly in favor of either side would only continue the struggle. He named five new directors "to fill the vacancies to be created"; these appointments included James J. Hill and Edward H. Harriman.

The announcement brought the maneuvering to a temporary end. At the same time, the Great Northern/Northern Pacific group took a step to prevent any future successful raids, or as Hill put it, "to permit eight or ten old men to place their investments where they would be secure after their deaths." To accom-

plish this, Hill proposed formation of a holding company, the Northern Security Company, "which should acquire the stock of *both* the Great Northern and Northern Pacific and issue in lieu thereof stock certificates of its own. Such a company would have, including the stock of the Burlington, a capitalization of three

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE, NEW YORK CITY



Brokers rush to buy Northern Pacific stock on Thursday, May 9, 1901, at the height of the panic.

of four hundred million dollars, and should be so large and strong that, in all probability, no alien or hostile corporation could ever get control of it by purchasing a majority of its shares."

The Northern Securities Company was indeed incorporated in New Jersey on November 12, 1901. However, its creation stirred up a political hornet's nest, and on January 7, 1902, the State of Minnesota brought suit in U.S. Circuit Court, claiming the company was an illegal combination in restraint of trade. On March 10, 1902, the Federal gov-

ernment also entered the case, which was then argued all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

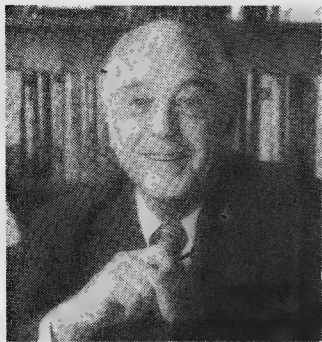
On March 14, 1904, the Supreme Court dismissed the Minnesota part of the case for lack of jurisdiction, but it decided against Northern Securities in the federal case and ordered the company dissolved.

In arranging for dissolution of the holding company, Hill and the board majority proposed that each shareholder receive \$39.27 in Northern Pacific stock and \$30.17 in Great Northern stock for each share of stock surrendered. On its face, this appeared fair, but to Harriman and the Union Pacific it was not. The effect of having to take some Great Northern stock instead of his exact original contribution was to annihilate the Union Pacific's slim stock majority in the Northern Pacific, leaving the Union Pacific with no advantage at all—simply a large financial interest in two corporations controlled by a hostile group. The Harriman group took the case clear to the U.S. Supreme Court—and again it lost.

But what a way to lose! Soon after the dissolution, the Great Northern Railroad added \$25 million to its capital stock. Great Northern stockholders were given the privilege of subscribing to the issue at par, though the stock was selling at a premium on the open market. The Harriman group's allotment was 37,444 shares. Then, in late 1905 and early 1906, an unusual market boom occurred, especially in railroad issues. Northern Pacific stock rose to \$232½ a share (only ten years out of receivership), and Great Northern stock went to \$348. The Harriman group saw this as a great opportunity and sold most of what it owned. The result: a net profit of \$58 million—a considerable consolation for a defeat.

A railroad expert of the day, Thomas Woodlock, when asked what he considered to be Edward Henry Harriman's greatest achievement, said, "I think it was this: to get licked in a fight and pull out with a colossal fortune as a result."★

Retired engineer Howard W. Schutz is a free lance writer who lives in Carmel, California.



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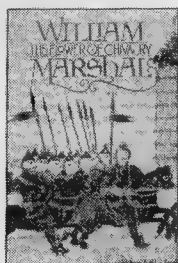
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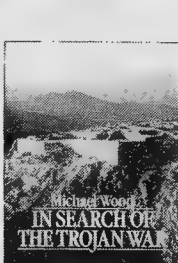
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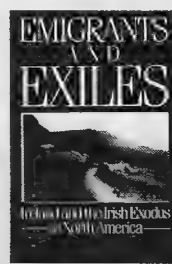
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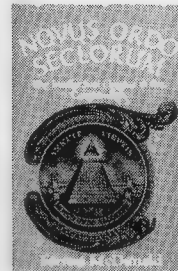
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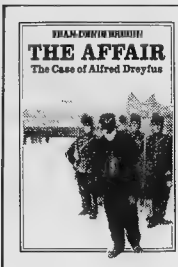
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The significance of this Revolutionary War battle was not that the Americans lost—but that they came so near to winning.

Germantown

by Jeffry D. Wert

"BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN" (DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL) BY XAVIER DELLA GATTA, 1782; COURTESY OF THE VALLEY FORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, VALLEY FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA



IT WAS SEPTEMBER 28, 1777, in the Schuylkill Valley some thirty miles northwest of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. General George Washington, commander in chief of the Continental Army, stood before an assembled council of war. The Virginian reviewed the strategic situation for the fourteen officers present, and his grave words underscored the setbacks the Americans had recently suffered. Washington's army had just been humiliated by a drum roll of reverses: defeat at Brandywine on September 11; losses from an enemy surprise attack at Paoli on the twenty-first; and then failure to prevent the occupation by the British army of Philadelphia, the fledgling nation's capital, on the twenty-sixth.

On the morning of October 4, 1777, an eleven-thousand-man force under General George Washington attacked Lord William Howe's army, encamped at Germantown, Pennsylvania, five miles north of Philadelphia. The engagement marked the first time during the Revolution that the American commander had committed a major portion of his army against the British. Xavier Della Gatta's 1782 painting, below, shows an early stage of the action as seen from the British point of view. As American troops advance toward the viewer along both sides of the Germantown road, retreating British infantrymen prepare to occupy and defend the Benjamin Chew House (right foreground).



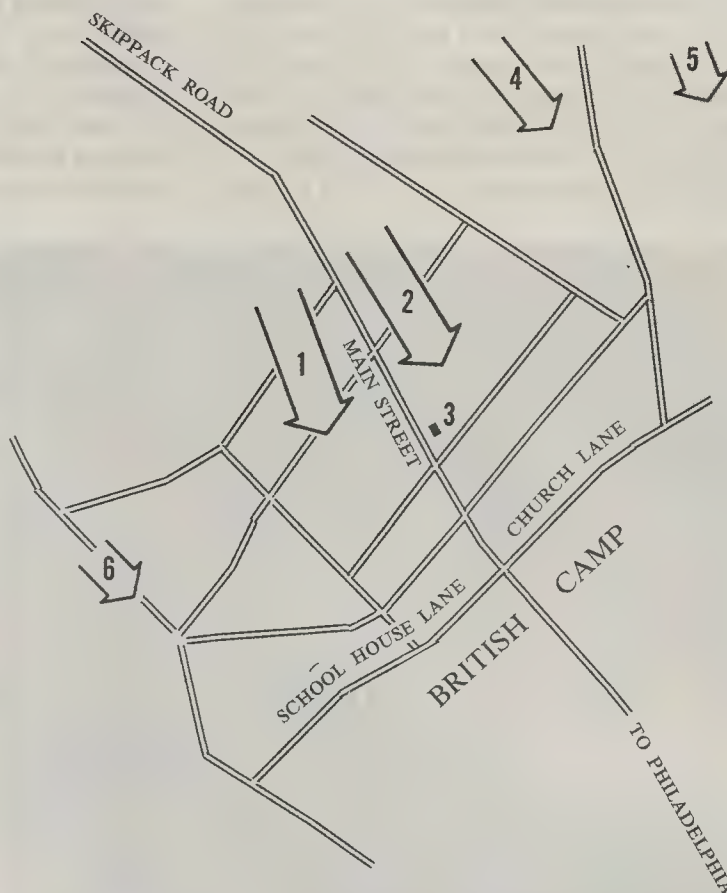
Battle of Germantown

October 4, 1777

The Objective: A nine-thousand-man army under British General William Howe was encamped at the village of Germantown, about five miles north of Philadelphia.

The Plan: Advancing by night with independent columns totaling about eleven thousand men, General George Washington hoped to surprise Howe with a coordinated attack from four different directions.

The Result: Driving British pickets before it, Washington's main force successfully advanced along both sides of the Germantown Road (1,2) to the very edge of the British encampment. Reserve units following were delayed, however, when they engaged in battle with a small British force defending Chew House, a stone mansion (3). Other regiments approaching on the left flank (4) arrived late on the scene, and some soldiers mistakenly fired on fellow American troops. Militia units (5,6) completely failed to reach the main battlefield. Finally, the troops carrying the main advance began to run out of ammunition. At the point "of grasping a compleat victory," the American advance disintegrated into a retreat.



It was a record that had brought a storm of criticism and protest.

Few of those at the meeting had been spared by their critics. Several of the officers had been accused of either drunkenness, cowardice, or incompetence. For Washington the old charges by his opponents were renewed—he was accused of indecision, laxity of discipline, and indolence. But now the commander in chief planned to salvage the army's fortunes with a swift surprise attack similar to his assault on Trenton, New Jersey, in December 1776. He proposed to his subordinates an attack on Sir William Howe's British army encamped at Germantown, five miles north of Philadelphia.

The proposed offensive, which would pit Washington's ill-trained army against a highly disciplined force of equal or even superior strength, met a cool reception from the majority of the listeners. Major General Na-

thanael Greene, a stout, muscular former blacksmith, spoke first, arguing against the plan. Nine other officers endorsed Greene's views. Brigadier General Anthony Wayne then rose and disagreed with the ten. Wayne, whose Pennsylvanians had been overrun a week earlier at Paoli, where over one hundred of them had been bayoneted around their campfires, advocated an immediate attack. Three other officers concurred with Wayne and supported Washington.

Outvoted two-to-one, Washington agreed with his generals to move closer to Germantown but to defer ordering an attack until receiving reinforcements and/or indications of a more favorable tactical situation.

Suggested additional reading: George Washington in the American Revolution (1775–1783) by James Thomas Flexner (Little, 1968).

On the next day, September twenty-ninth, Washington marched his Continentals eastward to the Reading-Philadelphia road, about eighteen miles northwest of Germantown. During the day nearly two thousand militiamen from Maryland and New Jersey arrived, increasing the army's strength to nearly eleven thousand troops.

Washington rested his men for two days while awaiting further intelligence from Germantown. On October 1 his spies, who had captured some British letters, reported that on the previous day Howe had detached part of his command to Philadelphia to clear the Delaware River and had sent two additional regiments across the river to assault American works at Billingsport, New Jersey. Howe's force in Germantown now numbered an estimated nine thousand men. (A smaller garrison, under General Charles Cornwallis, occupied Philadelphia proper.)

Washington immediately briefed his generals on these new developments, and they unanimously endorsed an attack. The Continentals, many poorly shod, some even barefoot, resumed the advance on the second, marching three miles to the home of Peter Wentz in Worcester Township, about fifteen miles from Germantown. This point, Washington believed, was the closest his columns could approach the enemy in daylight without revealing their position and intentions.

IN WENTZ'S BROWNSTONE HOUSE Washington wrestled with his tactical arrangements. For the first time in three years of war, he was about to engage a major portion of the British army. The maligned general formulated his orders on October 3, devising a complicated battle plan. Germantown, the site of the British encampment, was a quiet village of several dozen homes scattered along a two-mile stretch of the main road connecting Reading and Philadelphia. Several fence-lined lanes intersected the road at right angles. Most of Howe's army was deployed in a nearly straight line along two of the lanes, near the south end of town.

Hessians under Lieutenant General Baron Wilhelm Knyphausen anchored the left or western flank of the encampment, along School House Lane. Two British brigades lengthened this line to Main Street, where Major General James Grant's division extended eastward along Church Lane. Queen's Rangers (American loyalist soldiers) and two battalions of British Guards rounded out the east flank of the camp. General Howe's headquarters occupied Logan's House, about a half-mile to the south.

At the north end of Germantown a battalion of the Second Light Infantry provided support for a line of pickets. Near the center of the village, across from a stone mansion, the Fortieth Regiment provided additional reinforcements.

A network of four roads converging on Germantown provided the key to Washington's battle plan. Utilizing all of these available avenues, he hoped to achieve a coordinated, smashing dawn attack against the British encampment from four different directions.

To carry the main brunt of the assault, Washington assigned his three divisions of Continentals, numbering eight thousand men. Major General John Sullivan and Brigadier General Anthony Wayne were ordered to advance in a southeastward direction down Skippack Road, which led through Germantown and formed the village's main street. Major General Nathanael Greene, commanding the largest unit in the force, would follow Sullivan and Wayne's route until reaching Chestnut Hill, four miles from the center of town, where he would swing to the northeast to Lime Kiln Road and advance on Wayne's left.

Beyond Greene's left flank, the two militia brigades of colonels William Smallwood and David Forman were assigned a carefully described but confusing route around Howe's right flank and rear, bringing them into the village from the east by way of Old York Road.

The final unit in this pincer movement, Major General John Armstrong's Pennsylvania militia, was ordered to advance from the west, following the Manatawny Road that paralleled the Schuylkill River.

These orders—the most ambitious ones Washington had ever issued—finally specified that all four columns were to be within two miles of the British by 2:00 A.M. on October 4. A general halt was then directed until 4:00 A.M., with final dispositions to be concluded by that time. An hour later the Americans would attack Howe's pickets and begin the battle. This complicated operation, requiring a night march and concerted, timely movements, rested with officers and soldiers who had never previously participated in, much less succeeded in performing, such complex offensive movements.

SMALLWOOD AND FORMAN's militiamen departed on their circuitous route ahead of the other units on the evening of October 3. The Continentals, with Greene's division in the van, started at 7:00 P.M. Greene turned off the Skippack Road upon reaching the White Marsh meeting house at Chestnut Hill, while Sullivan and Wayne continued swinging eastward on a four-mile arc along the main road.

Horsemen scampered back and forth, endeavoring to maintain contact between the various columns, which were now scattered across several miles of the countryside. Though it was a dark night, no lights were allowed; every soldier had a piece of white paper stuck in his hat for visibility and identification.

Washington accompanied Sullivan and Wayne's column. To their rear, two militia brigades under Major General William Alexander (Lord Stirling) followed as a reserve.

At about three o'clock on the morning of the fourth—having been slowed somewhat by the rough road—Sullivan's van reached Mount Airy, about a mile north of Germantown and a point within the area covered by British pickets. His troops would have to cross more than two miles of ravines, rough ground, and fenced lanes before reaching the main British positions.

In the gathering light, Washington watched his stal-

wart veterans break ranks for a short respite. He could only hope that the other three columns had also reached their assigned destinations. Near dawn the Continentals stretched their limbs, re-formed their ranks, checked their muskets, and awaited the order. Then, as the leading brigade aligned itself, a heavy fog settled over the ground, blanketing the entire terrain and effectively screening the enemy.

Beyond the Americans' limited vision and on the reverse slope of Mount Airy, British pickets of the Second Light Infantry were stirring. While Sullivan and Wayne's men rested, these veterans had been alerted by Howe's headquarters of a possible American advance. But Howe had doubted the substance of the report, describing the reported Americans as "a mere flying party." "I did not expect," the British commander later admitted, "the enemy would have dared to approach after so recent a defeat as that at Brandywine." The general therefore only notified his outposts of the intelligence, while the majority of his main force slept soundly on.

At the appointed hour an American brigade under Irish-French volunteer Brigadier General Thomas Conway disappeared southward into the enveloping mist. Conway's soldiers, with instructions to bayonet the enemy pickets, were advancing up the slope of Mount Airy when musketry suddenly exploded in their faces. The alerted British pickets, under Captain Allen McLane, had fired at the shadowy figures and then withdrawn.

With the Americans' hopes for a complete surprise shattered, Sullivan, deployed on the western side of Skippack Road, sent support to Conway. At the same time Wayne, across the highway, ordered his Pennsylvanians forward. The combined American attack soon forced the entire British regiment back across fields of buckwheat.

The fog limited vision to less than one hundred yards as the battle moved nearly invisibly southward. Wayne's men, shouting "Have at the bloodhounds! Revenge Wayne's affair!" mercilessly bayoneted any British soldier who surrendered or lay wounded.

The easy American advance briefly halted when the Fortieth British Regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Musgrave, counterattacked from out of the fog. Musgrave's regulars succeeded in momentarily stabilizing the British front while covering the retreat of the Second Light. An officer with this latter unit afterwards stated that "this was the first time we had ever retreated from the Americans, and it was with great difficulty that we could get the men to obey our orders."

The firing soon became furious. Americans advanced from fence to fence, tearing down the rails by pulling and pushing on the posts. Musgrave's men torched the fields of buckwheat, and fog and smoke limited visibility at some points to thirty yards, making the entire ground "infinitely dark." But the Americans' overwhelming numbers and relentless pressure finally shattered Musgrave's front, and his soldiers streamed southward.

Lead units of the American force managed to penetrate all the way to the main British camp at the south edge of Germantown, but reinforcements in their wake were diverted by gunfire from the Chew House. Alonzo Chappel's painting (below) depicts the heated battle that swirled around the improvised fortress.



"BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN: ATTACK ON JUDGE CHEW'S HOUSE" COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Overleaf: A classic painting by nineteenth-century illustrator Howard Pyle focuses on the struggle taking place on the Chew House front lawn. "The Continentals tried in vain to batter down the door, which was held in place by a heavy iron bar," wrote Pyle. "The officer . . . lying upon his face at the right of the

picture, had been detailed to come forward with the flag of truce, demanding the surrender of the house. He was permitted to come close and then shot down." More than fifty Americans died at Chew House, and the diversion was a contributing factor to the outcome of the Germantown battle.



ATTACK ON CHEW HOUSE" BY HOWARD PYLE, 1898, COURTESY OF THE DELAWARE ART MUSEUM, WILMINGTON





Cliveden (The Benjamin Chew House)



Cliveden, the thick-walled greystone house that became a focal point of the Battle of Germantown, appears today almost exactly as it did in 1777 and is a national historic landmark open to the public.

Benjamin Chew, Cliveden's first owner, was born in Maryland in 1722 and studied law in England and the colonies. After a series of prestigious appointments, he rose to the position of Chief Justice of Pennsylvania in

1774. Chew built the elegant Georgian mansion as his country seat over a four-year span, from 1763 to 1767.

Chew himself was made vulnerable by his wartime allegiance, which was to the law rather than the American rebels or the British. He was arrested by American forces in the summer of 1777 and was held in northern New Jersey until the spring of 1778. When he returned to Cliveden, Chew found his mansion in ruins, heavily damaged by the battle of Germantown on the previous October 4. He sold his home to a young Irish merchant, who owned the estate for eighteen years.

In 1791, after Chew's neutral political affiliations became clear, he was reappointed as a jurist for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 1797 he regained ownership of Cliveden, and the estate remained in the Chew family for almost the next two hundred years. Cliveden was turned over to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1972.

Cliveden is located off Route 422 in northwest Philadelphia, approximately six miles from City Center. The six-acre estate and elegantly furnished house is open to the public from April 1 to December 31, Tuesdays through Saturdays 10:00–4:00, Sundays 1:30–4:30. Tours are held every hour. Admission is charged. For more information contact: Cliveden, 6401 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144, (215) 848-1777.

WASHINGTON, MEANWHILE, followed the action of the shrouded battle mostly by its sounds. The short crescendos of musketry, indicating a bitter struggle, caused him concern because of his army's limited supply of ammunition. He sent Adjutant General Timothy Pickering forward, saying: "I am afraid General Sullivan is throwing away his ammunition; ride forward and tell him to preserve it."

Shortly one of Sullivan's aides arrived, reporting that the British were retreating and that Sullivan had ordered Wayne to press the attack. The American commander concurred and directed his reserve, the brigades of major generals William Maxwell and Francis Nash, under Stirling, to align on the flanks of the advancing Continentals. Washington then spurred his chestnut horse forward, his major concern now for the unexplained silence on his left, where Greene should have been attacking.

Washington and some of his staff soon trotted into a confusing small action swirling around a two-and-one-half-story graystone mansion. Maxwell's brigade, advancing behind Sullivan and Wayne, had been halted by fire from the conspicuous dwelling named "Cliveden," the summer residence of former Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Benjamin Chew. Washington dismounted and stood upon a carriage-stone for a better view. From the barred doors and shuttered windows of the Chew House, British soldiers, under the redoubtable Musgrave, peppered Maxwell's ranks.

Washington's officers gathered around their commander, arguing whether to secure the house or bypass it. Washington's close friend and artillery chief, rotund Colonel Henry Knox, a student of classical military history, asserted in his roaring voice that it would be "unmilitary to leave a castle in our rear" and wanted the place surrendered or stormed. Other officers disagreed, maintaining that the house should be bypassed, leaving just enough men to contain it, since the reserves were needed more at the front lines.

Washington, however, accepted Knox's advice and sent Lieutenant William Smith forward under a flag of truce to demand a surrender. Smith never reached the house, crumpling to the ground with a fatal wound. The commander in chief immediately ordered a battery of four six-pounders forward to shell the improvised fortress. But the American cannons fired from an angle, only striking the house with glancing blows.

Undaunted, Washington ordered Maxwell, an officer who one subordinate had described as "that damned bitch of a general," to storm the Chew House. Twice "Scotch Willie" Maxwell's soldiers sortied toward the fortress, only to be driven back by the accurate British fire. Two American staff officers even ran to the house with tufts of blazing hay, while soldiers loaded a wagon with wood, set it ablaze, and dragged it to the door. Both efforts failed. Inside the battered house, Musgrave, a veteran officer with a gaping hole in one cheek from an

General Howe's Dog

General Washington's compliments to ^{General} ~~the Hon.~~ Howe. — He does himself the pleasure to return him a dog, which by the collar appears to belong to him, accidentally fell into his hands, and by the inscription on the collar appears to belong to his Excellency's friend ~~General~~ General Howe. —
Oct. 6. 1777.

Despite the terror, confusion, and fatigue experienced by its participants, the Battle of Germantown was not without its lighter side—as evidenced by the above dispatch from General George Washington to General William Howe. Somehow in the noise, smoke, and disorder accompanying the action, General Howe's pet dog became separated from its master—possibly when the

British commander beat a hasty retreat from advance units of the Continental forces—and thereafter tagged along with the wrong army. Two days later Howe's dog was returned to British headquarters under a flag of truce, accompanied by the above note penned by Washington's aide-de-camp Alexander Hamilton.

old wound, doggedly thwarted every American effort. Finally, after a delay of thirty minutes, Washington ordered the house cordoned off and sent the remainder of Maxwell's command southward. More than fifty Americans had died trying to dislodge the remnants of the Fortieth Regiment.

THE OTHER UNIT of the American reserve, Brigadier General Francis Nash's North Carolinians, had pressed beyond the Chew House while Maxwell bloodied his brigade there. Nash, a popular and brave officer, led his men into the fog to support Sullivan and Wayne. But while conferring with Major James Witherspoon of New Jersey, Nash was struck by a random British cannonball that nearly severed his thigh and tore off the side of Witherspoon's head. Nash's fatal wound slowed his brigade's advance.

Obscured from the North Carolinians' vision, Sullivan and Wayne's divisions groped on with surprising organization toward the fog-bound main works at the Market Square crossroads. The British regulars and Hessians defending the encampment had learned of the impending onslaught when the broken remnants of the Second Infantry and Fortieth Regiment appeared through the mists.

Sir William Howe, who had been unceremoniously roused from bed, met his retreating regiments, shouting: "For shame, light infantry, I never saw you retreat be-

fore. Form! Form! It is only a scouting party." Suddenly three American cannon rattled grape through the branches of the large chestnut tree under which the admonishing commander was standing. The "scouting party" was about to burst upon this main works.

Infused with victory, the Americans advanced like unrelenting specters from out of the fog. On the left, Wayne's Pennsylvanians, wearing long brown tunics and motley hats and breeches, dented Grant's works. Their commander had his roan horse killed from under him, while his left hand and foot were hit with shell splinters.

Sullivan, across the road from Wayne, stunned the two British brigades and Hessians occupying the west side of the encampment. While Sullivan tried to direct this final plunge, Washington appeared and rode to the very forefront of the action. The division commander convinced his superior to withdraw from danger, but Washington, flushed with a seeming victory, soon returned to the battle lines.

Then from the east the sound of ragged musketry indicated the belated arrival of Greene's division. This long-anticipated assault on Wayne's left (Greene's guide had become lost during the night march, requiring a tedious countermarch) apparently insured an American victory.

Greene's two center brigades, under brigadier generals George Weedon and Peter Muhlenberg, brushed aside two British regiments and drove toward Church Lane.



Major General Alexander McDougall's brigade on the extreme left, however, inexplicably never advanced, and the British Guards and Queen's Rangers lapped around Weedon and Muhlenberg's flank, blunting their charge. The British nevertheless clung only tenuously to their position; Howe actually considered ordering a retreat and evacuating Philadelphia. "The great cause," Washington subsequently reported, "was in my opinion, in one quarter of an hour of being finally settled."

BUT AN AMERICAN VICTORY was not to be. Greene's Berrant fourth brigade, commanded by an "utterly drunk" Brigadier General Adam Stephen, had veered out of the line of march during its approach to the battlefield, toward the sound of the firing at the Chew House. Then, confused in the fog and smoke, Stephen's riflemen had mistakenly and tragically fired into the rear of Wayne's brigade.

The Pennsylvanians, struggling blindly against fire from front and flank and now unexpectedly from the rear, apparently believed they were surrounded. Panic,

Hours after the Germantown battle, sentries outside British army headquarters in Philadelphia stand guard over newly captured Continental soldiers, while local citizens tend to their wounds. The prisoners were housed on the second floor of the State House, which survives today as Independence Hall.

"like an electrical shock," according to an American officer, "seized some thousands, who fled in confusion without the appearance of an enemy."

Simultaneously, the British, on the verge of retreating, heard the Continentals shout for ammunition. After more than two hours of continuous fighting, many of Sullivan's men had exhausted their forty-cartridge allotments. Seizing the opportunity, the British counter-attacked.

The entire American front quickly dissolved. Panic-stricken rebels jammed the main road, leaped the broken fences, and raced across the burning stubbles of buckwheat. Washington shouted at his fleeing veterans, threatening them with his sword before being himself

“Though the enterprise miscarried; it was worth the undertaking.”

swept rearward by his shattered army. The Americans even forgot their captured booty in the precipitate retreat. The Ninth Virginia of Greene's division, which had driven far into the enemy's defenses and taken a number of prisoners, was isolated by the British counterattack and surrendered nearly en masse.

None of the four thousand militiamen, meanwhile, had even reached the battlefield. To the west, on Manatowny Road, Armstrong's Pennsylvania militia contentedly skirmished with elements of Knyphausen's Hessians before retreating. And to the east, Smallwood and Forman's Maryland and New Jersey brigades wandered across the countryside. If these latter two units had arrived beyond the British right and advanced down Lime Kiln Road as planned, the entire British front would have become untenable.

Once past Germantown, the American flight slowed to a weary retreat. Rumors of attacks by British cavalry plagued the American columns, but the army simply continued trudging westward. “The retreat was extraordinary . . . Nobody hurried themselves,” noted Thomas Paine, a participant in the battle. Nobody could; the army suffered from “an almost unspeakable fatigue.” Officers fell asleep in their saddles, and the ditches filled with numbed soldiers. In one fence corner General Stephen lay in a drunken stupor; he would later be court-martialed and dismissed from the service.

Washington's army finally halted at Pennypacker's Mill, twenty miles from Germantown. Since the previous afternoon, with only water for sustenance, the weary veterans had marched at least thirty-five miles and fought a major battle. Sleep came quickly.

General Howe's battered British army, meanwhile, made only a half-hearted attempt to pursue the rebels. The Americans' surprise attack and near-victory had seemingly stunned the cautious British commander. Before him lay 71 dead British soldiers and an additional 450 wounded. American losses, however, doubled Howe's casualties—152 killed, 521 wounded, and 400 missing.

THE REASONS for the American defeat at Germantown have since engendered much controversy. The fog, the delaying firefight at the Chew House, Greene's delayed arrival, Stephen's drunkenness, the failure of the militia to engage the main enemy force, the shortage of ammunition, and the complexity of the original plan have all been offered as critical factors that denied the rebels an apparent victory.

Washington attributed the defeat mainly to the thick fog, without which “we should, I believe, have made a decisive and glorious day of it. But Providence or some unaccountable something designed it otherwise; for after we had driven the Enemy a mile or two, after they

were in the utmost confusion and flying before us in most places, after we were upon the point (as it appeared to every body) of grasping a compleat victory, our own troops took fright and fled with precipitation and disorder. How to acct for this, I know not; unless, as I before observed, the Fog represented their own Friends to them for a Reinforcement of the Enemy, as we attacked in different Quarters at the same time, and were about closing the wings of our army when this happened.” Washington also cited the “want of ammunition on the right wing” as contributing “not a little to our misfortune” and described the action at the Chew House as an “annoyance.”

Certainly the battle that raged at the Chew House must be regarded as a significant factor, having caused Wayne's advancing ranks to hesitate because of the musketry in their rear, and at the same time luring Stephen across country into his collision with Wayne. The resultant delay to Maxwell's reserves, too, prevented him from providing needed support at the front line of battle.

Finally, the Americans' valor and fighting prowess could not compensate for their commander's complicated battle scheme. Washington's simultaneous convergence in the predawn darkness demanded more than his worn, ill-shod troops could accomplish. Greene's divisions, comprising some two-thirds of the army, were an hour late arriving on the scene, and none of the militia brigades even reached the battlefield, vague orders, unfamiliar roads, and lack of enterprise having negated this segment of Washington's pincer movement. That the Americans came so close to victory testified to the martial spirit of the Continental units.

The Battle of Germantown nevertheless boosted American morale and, more importantly, thrilled Europe. Fighting Howe's regulars to a standstill during the course of a two-hour-and-forty-minute battle, the Continentals proved that they could drive back the best British troops. This essential fact did not escape the eye of the Comte de Vergennes, France's foreign minister. Nothing struck him so much as Germantown, he stated; “To bring an army, raised within a year, to this, promised anything.” Washington's audacious attack, combined two weeks later with Horatio Gates's defeat of John Burgoyne's British army at Saratoga, provided France with convincing proof of America's resolve.

Brigade commander George Weedon, writing of Germantown, perhaps best summarized the significance of the action: “Though the enterprise miscarried; it was worth the undertaking.” ★

Jeffry D. Wert is a Pennsylvania high school history teacher. He has written dozens of articles on American military history and is associate editor of the forthcoming Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War.

The Great Chief Justice

Continued from page 14

case—that the courts of the United States have the right to declare laws unconstitutional—was immediately recognized as the cornerstone of American constitutional law, and it has remained so ever since.

MORE THAN A HALF-CENTURY would pass before the Supreme Court would again declare an act of Congress unconstitutional, but its authority to do so would never again be seriously doubted. Marshall had made a bold stroke, and he had done so in such a way that neither Congress, nor the president, nor any other public official had any power to resist it. By denying relief to Marbury, he had made the Supreme Court's order marvelously self-enforcing!

Predictably, Thomas Jefferson was angry. If the Supreme Court could not issue writs of mandamus, Jefferson asked, why did Marshall spend so much time discussing Marbury's entitlement to a commission? And why did the chief justice lecture Madison that withholding the commission was an illegal act?

The president thought for a time that he might have the chief justice and his allies on the bench impeached. After a mentally unstable federal judge in New Hampshire was removed from office, Jefferson's supporters in the House of Representatives brought a bill of impeachment against Marshall's colleague on the Supreme Court, Associate Justice Samuel Chase. Chase was a Federalist who had occasionally badgered witnesses and made intemperate speeches, but no one seriously contended that he had committed an impeachable offense (which the Constitution defines as "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors"). So the Senate, three-quarters of whose members were Jeffersonians, refused to remove Chase from office. Marshall breathed a deep sigh of relief. Had the associate justice been impeached, the chief had no doubt that he himself would have been Jefferson's next target.

Though he never again had occasion to strike down an act of Congress, Marshall delivered opinions in many cases of national significance; and, in his capacity as circuit judge (all Supreme Court justices "rode circuit" in the early years of the nineteenth century), he presided over important, sometimes controversial, trials. He was the presiding judge when Jefferson's political arch rival, Aaron Burr, was charged with treason in 1807. Interpreting the constitutional provision defining treason against the United States, Marshall helped to acquit Burr, though he did so with obvious distaste. The Burr prosecution, Marshall said, was "the most unpleasant case which has been brought before a judge in this or perhaps any other country which affected to be governed by law."

On the high bench, Marshall presided over scores of precedent-setting cases. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810) and *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), he construed the contracts clause of the Constitution so as to afford important protection for the country's growing business

community. In *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), he upheld the constitutionality of the first Bank of the United States and struck down the Maryland law that purported to tax it. In *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), he upheld federal jurisdiction over interstate commerce and lectured those (mainly Jeffersonians) who persistently sought to enlarge state powers at the expense of legitimate federal authority.

Though Marshall's opinions always commanded respect, they were frequently unpopular. When, in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), he upheld the treaty rights of the Cherokee Indians against encroachments by the State of Georgia, he incurred the wrath of President Andrew Jackson. "John Marshall has made his decision," "Old Hickory" snapped contemptuously. "Now let him enforce it!" Marshall knew, of course, that he could not enforce the decision; that he could not enforce any decision that did not have the moral respect and acquiescence of the public and the officials they elected. And so he bowed his head in sadness and hoped that officials other than Andrew Jackson would one day show greater respect for the nation's legal principles and institutions.

Despite the controversy that some of his decisions inspired, the chief justice remained personally popular; and, during the whole of his more than thirty-four years as head of the federal judiciary, the Court grew steadily in authority and respect.

WELL INTO HIS SEVENTIES, Marshall continued to ride circuit in Virginia and North Carolina, to travel each year to his farm in Fauquier County, to attend to his shopping duties in Richmond, and to preside over the high court each winter and spring in Washington. On one of his visits to a neighborhood market in Richmond, the chief justice happened on a young man who had been sent to fetch a turkey for his mother. The youth wanted to comply with his mother's request, but thought it was undignified to carry a turkey in the streets "like a servant." Marshall offered to carry it for him. When the jurist got as far as his own home, he turned to the young man and said, "This is where I live. Your house is not far off; can't you carry the turkey the balance of the way?" The young man's face turned crimson as he suddenly realized that his benefactor was none other than the chief justice of the United States.

Joseph Story, who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court for more than twenty years of Marshall's term as chief justice, spent many hours with the Virginian in and out of Washington. Wherever Story observed Marshall, he was impressed by his modesty and geniality. "Meet him in a stagecoach, as a stranger, and travel with him a whole day," Story said, "and you would only be struck with his readiness to administer to the accommodations of others, and his anxiety to appropriate the least to himself. Be with him, the unknown guest at an inn, and he seemed adjusted to the very scene, partaking

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of the warm welcome of its comforts, wherever found; and if not found, resigning himself without complaint to its meanest arrangements. You would never suspect, in either case, that he was a great man; far less that he was the Chief Justice of the United States."

In his youth, Marshall had been fond of corn whiskey. As he grew older, he lost his appetite for spirits but not for wine. He formulated a "rule" under which the Supreme Court judges abstained from wine except in wet weather, but Story said he was liberal in allowing "exceptions." "It does sometime happen," Story once said, "the the Chief Justice will say to me, when the cloth is removed, 'Brother Story, step to the window and see if it does not look like rain.' And if I tell him that the sun is shining brightly, Judge Marshall will sometimes reply, 'All the better; for our jurisdiction extends over so large a territory that it must be raining somewhere.'" "You know," Story added, "that the Chief was brought up upon Federalism and Madeira, and he is not the man to outgrow his early prejudices."

In Richmond, Marshall held regular dinners for local lawyers, swapped stories with old friends, and tossed quoits with his neighbors in the Barbecue Club. An artist named Chester Harding remembered seeing the chief justice at a session of the Barbecue Club in 1829. Harding said Marshall was "the best pitcher of the party, and could throw heavier quoits than any other member of the club." "There were several ties," he added, "and,

before long, I saw the great Chief Justice of the United States, down on his knees, measuring the contested distance with a straw, with as much earnestness as if it had been a point of law; and if he proved to be in the right, the woods would ring with his triumphant shout."

In 1830, a young Pennsylvania congressman and future president of the United States commented on Marshall's enduring popularity among his neighbors. "His decisions upon constitutional questions have ever been hostile to the opinions of a vast majority of the people in his own State," James Buchanan said, "and yet with what respect and veneration has he been viewed by Virginia? Is there a Virginian whose heart does not beat with honest pride when the just fame of the Chief Justice is the subject of conversation? They consider him, as he truly is, one of the great and best men which this country has ever produced."

MARSHALL WAS NEARLY EIGHTY YEARS OLD when he died in Philadelphia on July 6, 1835. His body was brought back to Virginia for burial, where it was met by the longest procession the city of Richmond had ever seen.

In the contest between proponents of strong and weak national government, Marshall had been one of the foremost and clearest advocates of strength. The struggle—between union and disunion, between federation and confederation, between the belief that the Constitution created a nation and the theory that it aligned the states in a loose league—was not finally resolved until 1865. But the struggle *was* resolved. "Time has been on Marshall's side," Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., said in 1901. "The theory for which Hamilton argued, and he decided, and Webster spoke, and Grant fought, is now our cornerstone."

Justice Story thought that Marshall's appointment to the Supreme Court contributed more "to the preservation of the true principles of the Constitution than any other circumstances in our domestic history." "He was a great man," Story said. "I go farther; and insist, that he would have been deemed a great man in any age, and of all ages. He was one of those, to whom centuries alone give birth."

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both lived long and distinguished lives, but neither ever gave an inch in their differences of opinion over Marshall. Jefferson went to his grave bemoaning the "cunning and sophistry" of his fellow Virginian. Adams died secure in the belief that his decision to make Marshall chief justice had been both wise and provident. Years later, Adams called Marshall's appointment "the pride of my life." Time has accorded Thomas Jefferson a great place in the affections of the American people; but, in the controversy over John Marshall, the judgment of history has come down with quiet strength on the side of John Adams. ★

A California attorney and writer, Brian McGinty is a frequent contributor to this and other publications.

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Bookshelf

The United States Navy: 200 Years by Edward L. Beach (*Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1986; 564 pages, illustrated, \$24.95*). The work of a highly decorated naval officer and skilled historian and novelist, this informative and readable narrative charts the often stormy course of the American navy from its first hero and "founder," John Paul Jones, to modern times. Author Edward Beach chronicles the epic battles in U.S. naval history, profiles the outstanding leaders and villains of the service, and describes the revolutionary changes in naval warfare brought about by technical innovation. He points out that prior to 1941, U.S. naval history consisted mainly of growth and development, with a total of only about fifty-six hours spent in actual battle. While the pre-World War II navy concentrated heavily on training, says Beach, it failed to respond to rapidly advancing technology: "We believed training in the weapons of 1915 would remain useful in 1941 . . . Our sword was old and out-of-date; we had kept its blade and scabbard shining, but we had neglected to reshape its cutting edge." It would take World War II to do that reshaping. Readers will find this to be one of the best, if not the best, general histories of the U.S. Navy to date.

Treasure Wreck: The Fortunes and Fate of the Pirate Ship Whydah by Arthur T. Vanderbilt II (*Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1986; 164 pages, illustrated, \$16.95*).

One April night in 1717, the infamous pirate ship captained by Samuel "Black" Bellamy foundered in a storm near the Cape Cod shore, taking with it a year's booty, then estimated at some \$4 million in value. (Several of the ill-fated ship's crew members survived to find themselves manacled in a Boston dungeon and were later tried and hanged.) Although the existence of the wreck was known all these years, it was not until 1984 that the actual wreck site was discovered by Barry Clifford, a Massachusetts treasure hunter obsessed with the *Whydah* since childhood. This account focuses on the historical events relating to Bellamy and the *Whydah*, but also includes a narrative of the modern-day discovery of the wreck and subsequent recovery of some \$14 million in treasure and artifacts. ★

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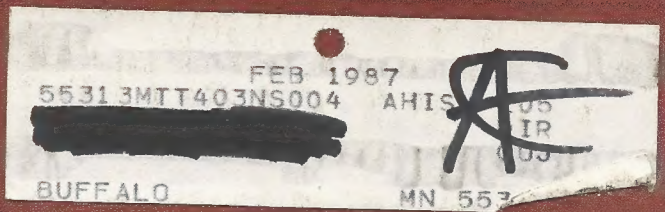
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